TRAITS OF NATURE,

BY

MISS BURNEY.

SECOND EDITION, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TRAITS OF NATURE,

BY

MISS BURNEY,

AUTHOR OF

CLARENTINE, GERALDINE FAUCONBERG, &c.

SECOND EDITION.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

When the inevitable hand of sweeping Time shall have brushed off all the works of *to-day*, oh, may the fame of this survive till *to-morrow*!—MARTINUS SCRIBLERUS.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN,
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY, CONDUIT STREET,
HANOVER SQUARE.

1812.

PREFACE.

Mr. Edgworth begins the introduction prefixed to the first volume of "*Tales of Fashionable Life*," by saying:—"My daughter asks me for a preface." *I* can only say, in excuse for a very dull page which I am about to write:—"My publisher asks me for a preface." To own the truth, there are few things which he could have asked that would have puzzled me more. Happy should I deem myself were I entitled to decline the task, by answering, "Good wine needs no bush." However, as I am not a volunteer in the business, I may surely be permitted to lighten its toil by taking the opportunity of exhaling against prefaces in general, some portion of

my long-hoarded antipathy. They are, for the most part, especially to works of this description, mere covert puffs, and declamations of mock humility, which neither those who value their time, nor those who are in search only of amusement, ever read.

Blessings have been invoked upon the man who first invented sleep! I feel no disposition to extend the benediction to him who first invented prefaces.—Yet sleep and prefaces are certainly of one and the same family. Prefaces produce stupefaction, and it not very rarely happens that stupefaction, or in other words, dullness produces prefaces. I have not the smallest hope of escaping the application of this remark to the undertaking which I am now labouring to perform: but I can by no means afford to blot the hazardous sentence, since it helps, at least, to fill up, without further trouble, the given space allotted to the terrible task of—*writing a preface!*

The first edition of this little work, happily found its way into the world without the wearisome appendage for which I am now solicited: I see not therefore why it might not have come forward again in its original plainness. But since a preface, I believe, like a wig upon a judge, is imagined to confer dignity upon a book (though most assuredly, the preface may too often be observed to say as little as the wig) I have at length consented to indite one;—taking all needful care that it should be sufficiently ungracious to preclude the danger of ever being applied to for another.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Publisher of this Work thinks it proper to state that MISS BURNEY *is not the Author of a Novel called "Seraphina," published in the Year* 1809, *under the Name of* CAROLINE BURNEY.

TRAITS OF NATURE.

CHAPTER I.

BORROWING.

DR. and Mrs. Hampden were the respectable and long established inhabitants of a small, but pleasantly situated, country town in one of the western shires of England. The former, a regularly bred physician, of considerable abilities and extensive practice, was regarded by all the principal families in the county, with a degree of distinction, seldom bestowed upon medical professors resident in districts very remote from the capital. His pleasing manners, cultivated understanding, and unpretending simplicity of character, might contribute, perhaps, as much to secure him the favour he enjoyed amongst the wealthy, as his skill and experience; but none

of these conspired so effectually to obtain for him the love and veneration of his patients of inferior rank, as his disinterestedness and humanity. By the suffering poor in the neighbourhood, he was deservedly beloved.

Mrs. Hampden, with a countenance severely ravaged by the small-pox, a mind unendowed with talents, and a decided enmity to all modern female accomplishments, had a heart so benevolent, and a temper so mild, ingenuous, and friendly, that she possessed the perfect confidence of her husband, his truest affection and esteem, and the most cordial regard of all who knew her.

Their family was large, and consisted, in addition to five children of their own, of a young inmate, who had resided with them from his sixth birth-day; and who now, as affectionately beloved as any of their own offspring, had nearly attained his thirteenth year. This boy's name was Mordington; he was the orphan descendant of a man of high family, though indigent circumstances; who, having possessed only a younger brother's inheritance, married

imprudently, figured in the gay world improvidently, died at the age of five and thirty, deeply involved in debt, mortification, and tardy self-reproach. His son, and a little girl, five years that son's junior, he left to the protection of his elder brother, a peer of the realm, and the head of their noble house. The infant daughter, motherless from the third day after her birth, was admitted into the nursery at Mordington Castle, and allowed to be brought up with Lord Ossely's own children. Algernon, the unportioned boy, was in a weak state of health, from the effects of a severe fever; and seemed as much unfitted for a public school, as he was for even a private education in any but a more sheltered part of England, than that in which his uncle's residence was situated.

Dr. Hampden had been the Peer's college acquaintance; the intercourse had even ripened into something like friendship; and an occasional correspondence had subsisted between them, although they had scarcely met three times in the course of the last ten years. To this worthy, yet not affluent man, the embarrassed Viscount

applied for advice respecting his drooping and dependant nephew. The doctor easily discerned that the true object of the application was to engage him to offer his house and professional superintendance to the ailing ward of his noble correspondent. He consulted with his wife, whose heart was touched by the mention of the boy's orphan state and unsettled health; and who compassionately agreed to burthen herself, already surrounded as she was by domestic cares, with the charge of the young invalid; and conscientiously determined rigidly to fulfil towards him the duties of a watchful mother. Her excellent management, the salubrity of their air, and the dormant vigour of young Algernon's constitution, effected, ere long, the complete restoration of his bloom, spirits, and strength. He was happier in the good physician's family than he had ever been in his life. The cordiality with which he was treated, gave warmth and animation to his own heart; he beheld not around him a single countenance he could forbear to love: Mrs. Hampden was dearer to him far than his own fashionable parent had

ever been; and the doctor, he at once reverenced as an oracle, obeyed as a guardian, and loved as a father.

The youngest child of this worthy pair, a little girl who could yet scarcely walk alone, was, however, menaced with the speedy appearance of a new brother or sister, to rival her in the mother's care and affection; when, as the menace drew nearer towards its accomplishment, Dr. and Mrs. Hampden, for the first time, found themselves in danger of losing a portion of that conformity in opinion, which had hitherto marked and facilitated all their deliberations.

A calm, moderate, and rational man in every common occurrence of life, Dr. Hampden was, in one respect, so incorrigible an enthusiast, that, to the sober apprehension of his wife, he often appeared little less than mad! Yet, as this enthusiasm was of a description perfectly distinct from every thing that could interfere with her personal or family concerns, she, as much as in humanity was possible, forebore all animadversion; and, indeed, had sometimes felt tempted to reflect upon it

with a degree of complacency, as one of the principal causes of her husband's quiet acquiescence in all her domestic regulations. But now that it threatened to encroach upon her own peculiar province, as sole directress of the nursery, she knew not how to regard it with the same composure.

The important subject in debate, at the present juncture, was neither more nor less than the baptismal appellation by which their unborn infant should be distinguished.

Except their eldest boy, who, at the express desire of a particular friend of the doctor's, had been christened William, all their children had received scriptural denominations. Such had been the case also, long before, with respect to Mrs. Hampden herself, and she gravely averred, that the practice had been similar, not only in her mother's, grandmother's, and great-grandmother's time; but as far back as the history of any of her progenitors could be traced. The docter, hitherto utterly careless about the matter, had contentedly suffered his house to be filled with a little tribe of Christians, so perfectly Jewish in nomenclature, that they would not have

appeared misplaced in the family of any of the patriarchs. But now, most unexpectedly, and to his wife's most serious annoyance, this carelessness was wholly superseded by a most ardent wish, should the child for whom preparations were making, prove a boy, to turn aside from the good old custom, " and," as Mrs. Hampden expressed herself, " to give the poor baby a vile heathenish name, which she feared would not only fill its own head full of idle fancies, but be the cause, God forgive her! that she should never love the little creature with half the fondness she had felt for her other children."

The doctor laughed at these apprehensions, and adhered immoveably to his purpose. Mrs. Hampden, with more real regret, than (after the first discussion was over) she thought it either wise or useful to display; or than her husband imagined it possible she could feel, then sighingly, abandoned the darling projects she had so long cherished of bestowing upon the little stranger, whom she firmly anticipated would be a son, her favourite denomination of *Benjamin.*

Exclusive of medical books, the doctor's library was neither very extensive nor very diversified. The infatuation above alluded to, and in which originated the unusual disagreement between himself and his wife, happened to consist in an ungovernable passion for reading, and a propensity to accumulate literary resources; which, during the early years of his married life, he underwent pangs the most grievous, to restrain within prudential limits. Yet, notwithstanding the noble victory he gained over his inclination to become a *purchaser* of every new work that appeared, nothing could subdue his rage for *borrowing* all that came under his observation. The loan of a valuable publication, in return for his professional attendance, might often, perhaps, have been regarded by him as equivalent to a fee, had not the recollection of the wife and family at home, depending upon him for support, fortunately stepped in, to inspire him with sentiments somewhat less magnanimous. Mrs. Hampden, however, often groaned in spirit at sight of the huge volumes with which, in all weathers, hot or cold, wet or dry, he would contrive, as he

rode back from the houses of his patients, to encumber himself, and load his horse. The sole book she ever voluntarily perused, furnished her with a quotation so applicable to his case, that, with the alteration of only one word, she declared it seemed written on purpose for him:

"Of *reading* many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

The doctor thought he had every possible reason to controvert the justice of this assertion; for never yet had he experienced any weariness, corporeal or mental, half so benumbing and oppressive to his faculties, as that occasioned by the failure of fresh literary supplies.

Yet it unfortunately happened, that the worthy physician not only read much, but read fast; and having worked his way through nearly every scanty library in the neighbourhood, had been reduced, for many a long evening, to pore over the dry pages of Postlethwayt's folio Dictionary, on Trade and Commerce. An interruption at length occurred to this soporific study:—but, as almost all sublunary good is attended with some counterbalancing evil, this very inter-

ruption proved a death-warrant to poor Mrs. Hampden's project of adding to the Jacobs and Josephs already in her family, the gratification of possessing a Benjamin.

Her husband being one day summoned to attend, in his medical capacity, a gentleman of considerable fortune, newly established in their vicinity, was struck, whilst in the sick man's apartment, with the sight of a large unopened brown-paper parcel; which, by its size and form, appeared to the doctor indubitably to contain—books.

Lingering somewhat beyond the time necessary for hearing the invalid's complaints, and writing the requisite prescription, the physician at length ventured to make some cautious enquiries relative to the object in view.

"There seems, sir," said he, "to lie yonder, what some persons would deem a very tremendous budget; at least if its contents are, as I presume, literary."

"Why, yes, Doctor, I know many whom such a sight would woefully alarm: particularly, if to the sight was added the obligation of reading the pages within."

"Pray, Mr. Melbourne, what may be the subject of those pages?"

" The whole parcel," replied that gentleman, " includes only one work; a new edition of Shakespear, the notes to which, I am told, are full of excellent criticism, learning and entertainment. I sent for it from town before my illness, and grieve that I have not yet been able to look into it: my daughter reads to me the newspaper, and now and then, a few pages of a novel; but for any thing that requires closer attention, I have not yet found myself disposed."

The doctor sat upon thorns during this speech. To hear that a publication, so interesting to every admirer of our illustrious bard (and Dr. Hampden stood foremost in that class), so expensive, and so difficult of attainment, should be thus condemned to lie neglected during the uncertain continuance of its possessor's indisposition, almost transferred to himself the fever he was called in to cure. Summoning courage, however, after an embarrassed pause, he thus resumed the conversation.

" In one of the last Reviews," said he, " I lately met with an account of this edition, which excited in me an extreme

desire to see it. Perhaps, sir, when you find yourself in spirits to open it, and have looked over the two or three first volumes, you will indulge me for a short time with their loan? I have a double motive," added he, smiling, "for being remarkably careful of borrowed books: the greatest apprehension of injuring them from respect and gratitude to their proprietors; and a constant dread, were the least accident to happen to them, of being cut off from the resource of ever borrowing again. A poor country physician, sir, with the greedy appetite for reading, and the slender means of appeasing it, which I possess, can never too sedulously guard against whatever threatens to render those means yet more limited."

Mr. Melbourne appeared much amused by the doctor's frank avowal of the motives that inspired him with such scrupulous care:

"My dear, sir," said he, "I have experienced more severely, perhaps, than yourself, the misery of being circumscribed in the choice of my lectures. During a pretty long abode I was obliged to make at

the house of a relation, in a wild district of Ireland, I underwent, in this way, a species of tribulation which I never reflect upon without wondering at the fortitude that enabled me to support it. But, Doctor," he continued, "you shall endure no deprivation of this nature from which it may be in my power to exempt you. If you can manage to put a couple of these volumes in your great-coat pockets, I will order the parcel to be immediately unpacked. The whole set, indeed, should be at your service if you had any convenient mode of conveyance for it, or could point out to me the best method of sending it to your house; it would be almost too bulky for a man on horseback."

"Oh, my good Sir," cried the enchanted doctor, "trouble not yourself about the means of carriage; only confide to me the whole valuable deposit, and I think I may venture to answer for its safe removal. We have acquired, my horse from habit, and myself from inclination, a resignation and facility in accommodating ourselves to heavy burthens, that renders us utterly insensible of every inconvenience attached to

them. Confide to me, therefore, I again entreat, your precious Shakespear, and be assured, the triumphant satisfaction with which I shall ride home in such company, will be surpassed by nothing but my gratitude to you for the trust."

As he spoke, the eager physician, fearful of hearing any objection started to his plan, hastily thrust the handle of his riding whip into his coat pocket, deposited his large hat upon his head, took the heavy parcel under his arm, with the same ease with which he would have lifted a kitten; and, somewhat abruptly, bidding his astonished, but laughing patient, good morning, quitted the room and descended to the hall.

Here he was encountered by Miss Melbourne, who, just returned from a walk, and totally unacquainted with his person, was much surprised to see him so encumbered, and in such manifest haste, and thought it not wholly superfluous to stop, and watch his proceedings.

A servant now appeared, whom the doctor requested to assist him in mounting his horse. The patient animal, fastened to one

of the pillars of the portico, raised his head as his master approached, and seemed to survey the additional weight intended for him, with looks of rueful anticipation. His exulting owner disregarded these tacit representations, and thinking only of the rich intellectual feast he had in store, mounted with an alertness that would have caused the by-standers some surprisé, had they known, that, without any species of corporeal refreshment, he had already been riding from house to house eight hours since his early breakfast.

The servant who had taken charge of the parcel, whilst he settled himself upon his saddle, now enquired what he was to do with it.

"Give it me, my friend," answered the physician, leaning down, and stretching forth his hands to grasp it.

"Lord ha' mercy upon me, doctor! You don't mean to ride so many miles with this huge weight before you!"

"'Tis nothing, my honest lad;—give it me, give it me;—I shall be at home in half an hour."

The man, amazed, hesitated however, no

longer to comply. Miss Melbourne, with encreased curiosity, drew nearer to the steps. The Doctor seized the ponderous encumbrance, heaved it up by one vigorous effort, encircled it with his right arm, and bowing to the inquisitive lady of the house, slowly and heavily trotted from the door.

CHAP. II.

ABSTRACTION.

At the distance of about two miles from Mr. Melbourne's, Dr. Hampden was overtaken by a sudden and violent shower of rain. There was no place of shelter near, and the trees were so thinly clothed with verdure, it being now the latter end of autumn, that they afforded not the smallest defence against the fast-falling drops.

In this emergency, the conscientious physician, mindful of his promised vigilant attention to the preservation of his borrowed treasure, and, in his anxiety for its perfect safety, regardless of his own, determined, as the flaps of his great coat were too short and scanty, to form for it a sufficient protection, wholly to strip the coat itself from his back, and wrap it round the parcel.

Thus exposed to the 'pelting of the pitiless storm,' the poor doctor rode on for two miles more; and, at length, completely wet

through, cold, shaking, and half ashamed of the deprivation to which he had submitted, alighted at his own door.

In the parlour, he was cheered by the comfortable sight of a blazing fire, before which, Mrs. Hampden, with her accustomed provident kindness, had placed his slippers, and his *home* coat. Great was her consternation to find, that not only the slippers and coat would be requisite, but an entire change of every thing he had on.

"The Lord be good unto me!" exclaimed she, passing her hand over his soaked sleeve —"How came you, my dear, in such a terrible pickle? Your great coat never let the rain through in this manner before!—And what" continued she, now first espying the parcel, which hitherto the doctor had contrived to keep in the shade—"what, in the name of wonder, have you here? Is not *this* your great coat, all bundled up into a heap? —Why, I verily believe, you have never had it on!"

"My dear," said the doctor, a good deal discomposed, "I should be glad you would not ask so many questions; but send Ruth to get me a dry shirt and stockings."

Mrs. Hampden suspended her enquiries to comply with this request. She dispatched her eldest daughter up stairs with a large bunch of keys in search of the fresh linen; called aloud for the boot-jack; stirred the fire into a brighter blaze, and turned all the children out of the room whilst their father shifted his attire.

The doctor, whom the distresses of the last hour had, in a very unwonted degree, ruffled and fretted, now resumed his usual cheerfulness, and as soon as his toilet was completed, desired the children might be re-admitted, and besought his wife to hasten the appearance of dinner.

Whilst they sat round the well-supplied board, and after every plate had been filled except her own, Mrs. Hampden, unable to extend her forbearance to any greater length, renewed her attack upon the poor doctor.

"Only think, my dear," she began, "what a foolish thing it was, for the sake of a few trumpery books, to rob yourself of the comfort of your warm great coat, and come home in such a miserable plight. I have been looking at the nasty parcel, and,

upon my conscience, it made me so angry, I could almost have found in my heart to throw it out of the window. What would you, as a physician, have said to any one else who had taken so much pains to catch the rheumatism?"

"Why, probably, my dear, I should have said pretty much the same that you have said; I should have declared it was a mighty silly piece of business."

"And, besides, my dear," resumed Mrs. Hampden, "it is a book that you have got already. I am sure your own Shakespeare is almost as good a print, and a great deal better bound."

The doctor took some pains, though far from confident of succeeding, to explain to her the superior merits of the edition he had brought home: but nothing could convince her that a long preface, innumerable critical dissertations, and a copious collection of notes, could so much enhance the value of a work already published without such appendages, as to entitle it to the sacrifice her husband had thought proper to make.

It was the singular, but invariable prac-

tice of Dr. Hampden, to pursue his studies in the family sitting-room. When intent upon any literary subject, the laughter and talking of his children, or the maternal reprimands of his wife, were equally powerless to disturb him. If, after long attention, his mind became fatigued, it was a pleasure to him, on closing his book, or putting down his pen, to look around, and see himself encircled by objects so cheerful and so beloved; to join in their gay prattle, or engage, as was not seldom the case, in their sports and pastimes. A small, but stoutly-constructed table, sacred to his use, stood on one side the chimney, from whence it would have been treason, even in Mrs. Hampden herself, to have removed it, or to have appropriated the slighest article. An easy chair, likewise a consecrated piece of furniture, occupied a place near it: and one entire side of the room was fitted up with shelves, containing by far the greatest portion of the doctor's library. Mrs. Hampden reserved for her own accommodation, in the centre of the apartment, a large round dining table, over which she expected, and tolerably well succeeded, to

retain exclusive dominion, for the several purposes of cutting out the household linen, spreading the children's play-things, or, as occasion might require, laying the cloth.

The room thus amply stored with objects both animate and inanimate, yet wore by no means an appearance of discomfort. It was large and lofty; the various faces assembled in it (some of them faces of the truest juvenile beauty) all exhibited an air of happiness and good humour; and space was never found wanting for the reception of a friend, or the admission, when requisite, of an infant's cradle.

According, then, to his constant custom, Dr. Hampden, after the indulgence of a short nap when dinner was over, turned to his little table, and spreading wide one of the volumes of his new Shakespeare, with an ivory knife in his hand, and a look of total abstraction from all other concern, began his evening lecture.

It was a considerable time since he had devoted himself to a regular and connected perusal of the works of our immortal bard; and, at every page, enraptured by the flashes of genius, the sublime morality, or

the sterling wit of the sentiments and expressions;—bewitched by the interest of the fable, which, as he read with scrupulous and unbroken continuity, gradually unfolded itself,—he was as a being transported into another world—and descried, or fancied he every moment descried, new beauties, which had never struck him before. Scarcely could he forbear bursting out aloud, with exclamations of enthusiastic admiration; or with favorite passages, which, thus detached, and read to such an audience, would have had the most ludicrous effect imaginable.

The hour of tea arrived, and Mrs. Hampden, ambitious of the praise with which her husband generally rewarded the excellent bowl she always compounded for him, felt surprised, and somewhat mortified, at his utter silence upon the subject, this unlucky evening. She had often before seen the doctor deeply engrossed by a favourite author, but *so* deeply as at the present moment, she never remembered to have observed him. Exclusive of *reading*, all he did was mechanical. He neither heard what was said to him, saw what

was offered to him, nor was conscious what he accepted.

The children, diverted beyond measure at an absence of mind so perfectly incomprehensible to their faculties, watched his proceedings with an eagerness and delight which insensibly communicated themselves to their mother, and dispelled the momentary vexation she had experienced. They took it by turns to hold the toast and butter before him, merely for the amusement of observing how totally he disregarded them; or, which was still better, to mark the instinctive accuracy, with which, at a single glance, he was able to distinguish and appropriate the nicest morsel.

Algernon Mordington, a privileged favourite, and, as all lively boys are, ingenious in devising schemes of mischief, now resolved, by way of experiment, and to heighten the entertainment of his tittering young friends, to try how far he might venture to disturb the doctor's attention, without awakening his resentment or putting to flight his silent ecstasies.

Curled up before the fire, enjoying the soundest repose, lay a large old tortoise-

shell cat, a notorious thief, but the passive play-thing of the children, whom, if she did not play with in return, she at least *endured* with a very laudable, and somewhat rare command of temper. Mordington gently took her in his arms, and sat down upon a low stool close to the chair of the doctor, who had just possessed himself of a third piece of toast; and, during the long intervals between every bite, his hand, with the fragment it held, hung down over the arm of his elbow chair. Algernon contrived cautiously to move his knees, and, at the same time, the cat, which was sitting upon them, in such a manner, that her whiskers were brought into close contact with the well-buttered morsel. The animal affected an air of disinterested innocence; blinked, looked sly, sniffed meekly at the dainty prey; then directed her eyes to other objects, and commenced so melodious a purr, that her mischievous seducer began to fear her honesty, for the first time, would prove superior to her greediness.

"Hang her!" murmured he, "she never was so bashful before!"

But at the very moment his disappoint-

ment was at its height, and his patience was almost exhausted, the artful animal voraciously snatched the alluring bait, and springing from Mordington's arms, darted to the most obscure corner of the room.

The doctor, somewhat startled at so abrupt a seizure, looked down mechanically, to discover its perpetrator; but all traces of the culprit had vanished, and with the tempted the tempter had also disappeared; for Algernon, wisely anticipating the direction his guardian's eyes would take, immediately on the commission of the theft, screened himself from observation behind the high back of the easy chair.

Unable to descry the cause of his disturbance, the physician soon lost all remembrance of either cause or effect, and without asking a single question, fixed his eyes again upon the pages before him, with as much tranquillity as if nothing had happened.

The children all stared; and the broadest grin of mixed wonder and merriment appeared upon their little faces. Not one of the set could comprehend how the loss of so delicate a morsel could be endured with

such philosophic apathy; and the circumstance, if it did not, in their unreflecting minds, excite any very exalted veneration for Shakespeare's captivating powers, at least convinced Algernon, that he possessed in him, a friend, under whose protecting auspices, he might, that evening, indulge, with impunity, whatever vagaries entered his imagination.

Quietly therefore stealing forth from his concealment, and crossing over to the place where Ruth, the eldest of the little Hampdens, sat—

"I am resolved," said he, "to do the thing handsomely; puss shall have some tea to her toast, and learn to reverence Shakespeare as she ought!"

He then went in pursuit of the conscious and guilty Tabby, and conquering her modest reluctance, soon succeeded in bringing her forward again to the scene of action.

Mrs. Hampden, apprized by Ruth, of the boy's design, threw no impediment in the way of its execution. Her husband's extreme taciturnity and absence of mind began to weary her, and though she would not

promote, she could not prevail upon herself to forbid, the harmless plots, from which all the little group, it was evident, expected so much entertainment.

As the doctor always drank a great deal of cream in his tea, his youthful and unsuspected persecutor concluded the cat would have as little objection to partaking it with him as her kindest well-wishers could desire. Accordingly, after coaxing and emboldening the distrustful pilferer, till all her fears of consequences were pacified, he dexterously slid her down behind the doctor, upon the seat of his chair, and, unperceived, continued stroking and encouraging her, till he saw her eye rest upon the full saucer, which for nearly a quarter of an hour, the doctor, whilst still reading, had held in his hand *to cool*. When, satisfied that she descried the object to which he wished to direct her attention, Algernon retreated, leaving her further operations to the guidance of her own coveting nature.

It was not long before the young expectants, all on tip-toe to observe the cat's proceedings, were gratified to the utmost

extent of their wishes. Slowly and warily, but yet with purpose almost fixed by recent impunity, the fair 'Selima' crept towards the immoveable saucer. It was held nearly on a level with her mouth, which, by imperceptible degrees, she advanced so closely to it, that, at length, to the inexpressible rapture of Algernon and his accomplices, she very fairly began lapping!

"Whew!" ejaculated the astonished doctor, "What's all this?" and bestowing upon her a smart and sudden cuff, he drove her, shaking her ears, to seek shelter beneath a distant book-case.

Mrs. Hampden and the children could repress their audible risibility no longer; though they were awkwardly endeavouring to find for it some excuse, when a loud ringing was heard at the gate of the little court before the house.

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Hampden, recovering her gravity in a moment at this sound, "I hope, my dear, none of your patients have sent for you such a dismal wet night!"

"To own the truth, my dear," replied

the doctor, looking rather rueful, "I heartily join in the same hope."

Algernon now ran out to ascertain the nature and object of this peal, and presently returning, with a countenance somewhat clouded over,

"Sir," said he, to Dr. Hampden, "it is a servant from Mrs. Cleveland's: you are requested to go to her house immediately, for she has had a kind of fit, and is very ill indeed."

"Had any one else sent for me just now," cried the doctor, slowly rising, and beginning to cast off his comfortable home attire, to resume the cloaths—now thoroughly dry —which he had worn in the morning, "I should have been bitterly tempted to wish the honour had been conferred on any other Esculapius: but this admirable old lady so fully possesses my respect, that under any circumstances, I feel it both a duty and a gratification to attend her."

"Was not the lady's name Cleveland," said Mrs. Hampden. "who took so much notice of you, Algernon, and of Ruth and David, last Sunday, coming out of church?"

"Yes," answered Mordington, "and once before, she was very kind to us when she was out airing, and met us all scampering homewards as fast as we could, because it rained so violently, and thundered and lightened, and poor Ruth was so miserably scared. She took us up in her carriage, and brought us to the gate: don't you remember it?"

"*I* remember it, at least," said Ruth; "and in all my life I don't think I ever shall forget how loud the thunder was, just over our heads, and how black and dismal it grew, and how terribly I was frightened!"

"And don't you, therefore," said Algernon, smiling, "pray most heartily for poor old Mrs. Cleveland's recovery? Only think, how unlucky it would be if there were to come another storm, and she should not be in the way to pick you up!"

This was spoken in a low voice; and before little Ruth had time to plead not guilty to the charge of such selfishness, the doctor called to her for his hat and gloves; and earnestly recommended to his wife, the

most exact vigilance in preserving his book from being touched during his absence.

"You need not frighten yourself, my dear, I assure you," answered she; "the children won't be much tempted to amuse themselves in that way; and as for myself, you know, I never have any time to spare for reading except on a Sunday."

"Well, my dear, we won't dispute which it is you most want, time or inclination: but with regard to the children, I should be very glad they felt no disposition to plead the deficiency of either, provided the books they read were my own."

"The Lord forbid," cried Mrs. Hampden, with some earnestness, "that my girls, at least, should ever take to so lazy and useless a habit, as that of sitting nose and knees together, poring over every book they find! It's well enough for boys, who can't work, and would only be in mischief, perhaps, if it was not for a little reading, which helps to keep them quiet, and does not take them off from any thing more profitable."

Algernon laughed heartily at this speech;

and the doctor, as he left the room, good-humouredly said—

"Well, my dear, I am glad there is any exception admitted in this family to the *profitable* rule of encouraging systematic ignorance! Mind, boys; as you can do nothing more useful, your opening a book occasionally, is a trespass that will be pardoned."

The younger children, after the departure of their father, being sent to bed, there now remained below only Algernon, William Hampden and Ruth. Each individual of the friendly trio found out some favourite occupation. The little girl borrowed a pair of scissars to cut out a new frock for her doll; William, a young mechanic, busied himself intently in giving the last finish to a fox and goose board of his own constructing; whilst Algernon, after a considerable interval, spent in drawing rocks, ruins, ships and trees, suddenly desisted, saying, as he gathered together all his materials, and started up,—

"I wonder I never had the wit to read a whole play of Shakespeare's through! What entertains Dr. Hampden so *very* much,

might surely amuse me a little. Dear mother," added he, a name by which he often delighted to address Mrs. Hampden, "let me just look, which play he was so deeply engaged with; I won't turn over the leaf, or even touch it.—Oh, the first part of King Henry IVth.—Well, I'll get the old edition he allows us to read, and try how I shall like it."

He then, providing himself with the volume in question, returned to the table, and seated himself with the fixed determination not to stir till he had finished, at least, the first two acts.

Algernon Mordington, fearless of every thing but the displeasure of those he loved, animated and happy as rational indulgence, youth, and glowing health could make him, possessed a countenance strongly bearing evidence of a high descent, and according perfectly with the liberal spirit of his character. He was not regularly handsome; but the expression of his face was grateful to all beholders: his figure was light and elegant; his walk, his every movement, were elastic and graceful: his talents were repressed by an education too confined; but they were by nature brilliant, and notwith-

standing the disadvantages he had to contend against, his progress, as a classical scholar, did honour at once to himself and to the obscure schoolmaster under whom he had hitherto been brought up.

The task to which, with all the energy of his disposition, he now applied himself, soon acquired the power of fascinating his attention, nearly as exclusively as it had enthralled that of Dr. Hampden. The character and sentiments of the gallant Hotspur transported him beyond all measure. The wit and facetiousness of Falstaff, he was perhaps scarcely yet of an age duly to appreciate: but the heroism, the blunt frankness, the mixture of greatness and gaiety in Harry Percy, threw him into raptures: he laughed, admired, clapped his hands, and perpetually burst out into exclamations of the most fervent applause; and when, at ten o'clock, Mrs. Hampden insisted upon his retiring for the night, he conveyed, undiscovered, the darling volume up stairs, and placing it under his pillow, opened wide the shutters at the foot of his bed, that he might resume his lecture with the first ray of light.

CHAP. III.

NARRATION.

Dr. Hampden did not return from his visit to Mrs. Cleveland till near eleven o'clock. He appeared rejoiced that the children had left the parlour; and told his wife he had something of consequence to say to her.

Mrs. Hampden, well disposed by this exordium, to give him her undivided attention, put aside her work, stirred the fire, drew her chair close to his, and assured him, that from her he should meet with no interruption.

The doctor patiently waited till all these operations were over, and then began.

"The excellent old lady from whose house I am just returned," said he, "sent for me this evening, in the double capacity of physician and friend. She has been in this neighbourhood about three months. I have frequently attended her, and was well

aware, from the first hour in which I saw her, that hers was a life no human skill could prolong through the ensuing winter. Our mild sea air appeared, while the change was new, to agree with her: she went out every day; her spirits were cheerful, and her looks, like her mind, composed and benevolent. She is the mother of two sons, the eldest of whom accompanied her to this place, and remained at it nearly a fortnight after she had procured the retired and pretty habitation she still occupies. He was then summoned away by business: but he left under her care his two youngest children, with their needful attendants; and not till yesterday did he again make his appearance at his venerable parent's. Mr. Cleveland, you are to know, my dear Hannah," pursued Dr. Hampden, "has been peculiarly unfortunate in his family concerns. He is still a young man,—perhaps scarcely five and thirty—yet has he already been twice married. His first lady made him the father of two daughters. She was amiable and good, and her loss was a severe calamity, both to him and his little girls. I know not, however, how it happened; but about eighteen months after her

decease, he introduced to his mother and family another wife—a young creature scarcely more than seventeen—beautiful as an angel—thoughtless as the veriest mortal! They lived together, sometimes as the fondest lovers, sometimes as the bitterest foes. She presented him with a son and heir, and two years afterwards, with a little daughter. Unhappily for this last child, their discords had arisen, several months previous to her birth, to a most fearful height. Mr. Cleveland was madly jealous of his inconsiderate young wife; he refused to see his infant daughter, and insisted on her being placed at nurse. Mrs. Cleveland murmured, remonstrated, wept and solicited in vain. The child *was* sent to nurse; and the indignant mother, to retaliate upon her husband, whom she had now learnt to abhor, injury for injury—disgraced herself, and a few months after her recovery, eloped with the very man whose attentions to her had first awakened Mr. Cleveland's displeasure, and excited his suspicions."

"What a very disagreeable story, my dear!" cried Mrs. Hampden, to whom annals of this sort had seldom been com-

municated, and whose natural purity led her to recoil from, and shudder at whatever was vicious—" Did the old lady tell you all these particulars herself? What could induce her to publish the wickedness of her own family?"

The doctor could not repress a smile at his wife's superabundant scrupulosity:—

" Hear me to the end with patience, my good friend," said he, " and you will acquit poor Mrs. Cleveland of all indiscretion or indelicacy in this business. I told you, that when her son left her in our neighbourhood, at the beginning of autumn, he consigned to her protection his two youngest children —the off-pring of that second marriage he had so much reason to deplore. It was wholly owing to the benevolent exertions of old Mrs. Cleveland, that the poor little girl, whose early dismission from her father's roof had caused so much mischief, was ever suffered in his presence. He transferred to her a large portion of the animosity he had nourished against her mother: she was excluded from his house, and banished his sight, till her third year was completed. The nurse to

whom she had been entrusted, proved to have some principle and some humanity; she was perfectly just to her helpless charge, and reared her in health, neatness, and comfort: but had it been otherwise, there was no one to interfere in the poor baby's behalf. Her expenses were paid annually by Mr. Cleveland's steward; the nurse was never asked to produce her, never exhorted to future, or thanked for past attentions. Perhaps, as the aged Mrs. Cleveland remarked, in extenuation of this part of her son's conduct, perhaps he might entertain doubts of the child's legitimacy: but these, she added, were unjust, though, possibly, unconquerable suspicions; since the little girl bears an obvious resemblance to the Cleveland family. The venerable grandmother had compassion on the pitiable exile; she often expostulated with her son upon his unkindness towards her, and at length urged him to commit the little creature solely to her protection. With some difficulty, he consented: his mother and he lived apart; he was under no obligation of frequently seeing the child, and he could not answer it to his conscience,

because he had no love for her himself, to deprive her of the love and guardianship of his respectable parent."—

The doctor then proceeded to state, that the child had now resided nearly four years with Mrs. Cleveland, to whom she was grown peculiarly dear. Her father had detained the two daughters by his first marriage under his own roof, and procured for them an excellent governess; but the being on earth most precious to his affections, was his son. This adored boy, brought up, as well as his half sisters, at home, was now in his ninth year. A more spoilt, unruly, consequential little tyrant never encroached upon paternal indulgence, to be a torment to all around him! Elinor and Alicia, his two sisters, feared as much as they disliked him; their governess, who could not always exclude him from the school-room, feigned illness in order to give her little pupils their lessons in her own chamber; he had already caused the dismission of three tutors;—he was the terror and scourge of every servant in the house—and all this while, the idol of his misjudging father.

At the time Mrs. Cleveland, by the ad-

vice of her physicians, established herself in Devonshire, her son, who had travelled with her, solicited permission to make his little boy, just recovering from the measles, the companion of their journey, and his grandmother's inmate till his health should be perfectly re-established. Sickness had somewhat tamed him, and Mrs. Cleveland consented to the proposal, on condition a steady tutor should attend him.

If Julius (the name of this petulant youth) had severely tried the temper, and been to his two elder sisters, a bane and an affliction, it will readily be believed, he was to the timid little Adela, an oppressor the most indefatigable. He saw that their father had no affection for her; that he never spoke to, and as seldom as possible looked at her. He beheld her always trembling in that father's presence; and was perfectly aware, that except Mrs. Cleveland, she had not an efficient friend in the world. One in humble life she possessed, most fond and most faithful. It was a young negro woman, named Amy, who waited upon her person, was her nurse, her comforter, her almost constant companion. Mrs. Cleveland had been in-

duced, at the request of a dying friend, to admit this honest creature, when quite a girl, into her household, and to promise her protection whilst she lived, and a moderate provision at her death. From the moment little Adela became a member of her grandmother's family, the warm-hearted Amy conceived for her the liveliest affection; Mrs. Cleveland encouraged the attachment, and Adela soon repaid it with devoted sincerity.

Julius beheld their mutual regard with undisguised derision. He was forbidden to molest the little girl herself, and, openly, never disobeyed: but on Amy, without the smallest scruple, he took every opportunity of disburthening his ill-humour; and perpetual had been the squabbles between them, almost from the first day of their becoming acquainted.

Mr. Cleveland was now returned to fetch this darling boy, and to ascertain the progress of his mother's recovery. He seemed shocked at the alteration which had so visibly taken place in her looks and strength; and resolved to become a resident for some time under the same roof. Of his

unoffending little girl, he, as usual, took not the slightest notice. Mrs. Cleveland sighed, as she observed this unnatural antipathy. Her own dissolution, she knew, was fast approaching. Who, when she was gone, would be a friend to the poor outcast? Who would rear, who would even afford her shelter? She meditated long upon this mournful subject; and then an incident which occurred in her presence, the very evening she sent so suddenly for Dr. Hampden, induced her to confide all her perplexities to him, and unreservedly to solicit his advice.

She was sitting in her dressing-room, between dinner and tea, propped up by pillows, in an easy chair, listening to her son, who was reading to her; when Julius, rendered more daring by the return of his father, burst abruptly into the apartment, and with a face—handsome as it was—distorted by passion, sobbed out, in accents scarcely intelligible, a vehement complaint against Amy and his sister—averred the former had insulted and struck him, and finally, forced him out of the room.

Mr. Cleveland, exasperated by this report

almost to an equal degree with the enraged accuser, was impetuously rising to pour forth against the supposed delinquents, the full measure of his wrath; but his mother, though much agitated by the boy's sudden intrusion, besought him to do nothing rashly; said she would attend him herself to the culprit's chamber, and rung for a servant to support her feeble steps in walking.

Julius now suspended his angry sobs; and obviously discontented, rudely cried out—

"Oh, grandmamma, what should you go for? You'll only take their parts, I know very well! you always do."

"I shall take the part of truth and justice," answered Mrs. Cleveland.

The humoured urchin, by impertinent speeches, by cries, and even attempts at manual opposition, did all in his power to prevent her departure. But she gravely commanded him to desist, and leaning on a footman, moved slowly forward.

On reaching the door of Adela's room, her grandmother dismissed the servant, and took hold of the arm of Mr. Cleveland.

At the upper end of the chamber, Amy

and the child were seen both seated on the floor, holding between them a beautiful little dog, which appeared to have sustained some recent injury which they were endeavouring to relieve.

"Adela," said Mrs. Cleveland, "what is the matter with poor Frisk? What are you and Amy doing to him?"

"We are washing away the blood from his wound, grandmamma," answered she, in a low voice.

"His wound! what wound? How did he receive it?"

Before this question could be answered, Amy espying Julius, notwithstanding the attempt he made to screen himself behind his father, reproachfully called out—

"Ah, naughty young massa! why for you come here again?"

"He comes, Amy," said Mrs. Cleveland, "to hear you answer to the accusation he has brought against you for having treated him exceedingly ill—for having even struck him."

Amy uttered a long groan, and looked aghast at these words; whilst Adela, di-

recting towards her brother a glance so expressive that it made him colour, threw her arms round the negro's neck, and sobbed upon her bosom.

" Don't cry, dear little missy !" cried the sympathizing nurse: " don't cry—never mind bad boy."

Mrs. Cleveland now desired to hear, in plain terms, what had passed; but Amy, shaking her head, replied,

" Me no like tell, Big massa," meaning Mr. Cleveland, " think all right what little massa do."

This reluctance was misinterpreted by that gentleman, who himself now peremptorily ordered her to speak.

Amy, thus urged, gave, as clearly as she could, the following account.

Julius, she said, ruffled and irritated by some previous provocation which he had received from the servants below, ascended to his sister's room soon after dinner, with every disposition to tease and harass her that idleness and ill-humour could suggest. At first, he pretended a wish to play with her; but, besides that she was afraid of his

roughness, she was far from well, and had no spirits for exertion. He then, muttering at his sister's peevishness, tried to induce Amy to romp with him; but here again he was unsuccessful: she could not be persuaded when her little mistress was indisposed, to make any noise in the apartment, and intreated him to go and amuse himself elsewhere. Resenting these successive failures, he positively declared he would not move; complained bitterly of their ill-nature; and, with childish and passionate impatience, flunghimself upon the ground, and half crying, half scolding, threw his arms and legs about in so vehement a manner, that it became dangerous to venture near him. Amy, too-well acquainted with the usual catastrophe of these perverse humours not to feel assured that so ill a beginning would have a yet worse end, kept a strict watch over him, and made signs to her young charge to remain at as great a distance as possible. Poor Frisk, meanwhile, unsuspicious of the hazard he incurred, and appearing to think the boy's contortions were solely practised for his di-

version, capered up to him with t
joyous glee, and disregarding the
thumps he now and then received,
nued barking and frolicking around
in defiance of all Amy's and the little
endeavours to call him off.

Observing their uneasiness, Julius
denly started up, seized the dog by the
and indignantly said.

"What is it you are so afraid
Hav'nt I a right to play with him i
chuse it? What do you call him away fo

Then, setting down upon the carpet, l
began a sort of spiteful attack upon th
little animal, that not only often made him wince, but filled his gentle mistress with sorrow to behold. The effect thus produced, Julius contemplated through his long dark eye-lashes, with secret satisfaction; and at length, averring he had just discovered that Frisk had been unequally cropped, he seized a pair of scissars which accidentally lay upon a chair near him, and threatened with provoking gravity, whilst brandishing the dangerous weapon about to pare his ears into better shape. Adela could not suppress a scream of terror

hing forward to wrest the scissars n, he dashed them furiously to- er. They missed their aim, but as ll, fixed themselves by the points ii the legs of the devoted Frisk.

ry particle of gall in Amy's compo- on was set afloat by the view of this r. She considered not, that though, rage of the moment, it had been im- tly risked, it was yet wholly unpre- cated; but catching the young offender er arms, ere he could guess, or oppose design, she conveyed him to the landing- ce, hastily re-entered the room, and cked the door against him.

Such an affront to his pride, the first of the kind he had ever received, irritated him almost to madness. He struck his head, his feet, his hands against the door with frightful vehemence; raved for re-admission till his own outcries made him hoarse; and when he found that Amy was alike insensible to his clamour, and to his menaces, he rushed down stairs with frantic speed, and burst in upon his father and Mrs. Cleveland in the manner that has been described.

This story, though told by Amy imperfect language, was yet sufficie ·elligible to fill her aged auditor w pleasure and disgust. She turned to to the outrageous boy a severe reproc he had slipped out during the recita was no where to be seen. She then round at her son, and with forced posure, said,

"What is *your* opinion of Amy's r tive?"

Mr. Cleveland shrugged his should smiled superciliously, and moving towar the door to depart, answered carelessly,

"That it has been the most fatiguing detail of a nursery squabble to which I ever was summoned to listen."

"And is this all you have to observe upon the subject?"

"No, madam; if you demand my further opinion, I shall say, that of your two pets—your black pet, and your white pet," ooking towards Amy and the little girl, ' I scarcely know which behaved most ungraciously to my son. What has happened, was the mere effect of transient passion:

y's temper is not cruel; he had no seriously to hurt the dog."

, Augustus! what unjustifiable par- How pernicious will it be to your

o not, dear madam, provoke me to y thing that will give you pain. I have nterfered in what relates to the ma- nt of the objects to whom *you* are ed, and I should be happy if you observe the same rule with regard to *I* love."

Ie then left the room; and Mrs. Cleve- d, sighing deeply, mentally exclaimed, With such a brother, and a father so in- lifferent, what is to become of the defence- less Adela when I am gone?"

Shortly after, under the pretence of en- creased indisposition, or rather from the dread of delaying so important a consulta- tion, the old lady sent for Dr. Hampden, and in a long and confidential conversation, communicated to him the above particulars, and solicited his advice how to secure to her grand daughter, at her impending de- cease, a peaceful and permanent asylum.

"I am able freely to dispose," she stated, "of the sum of three thousand pounds, which I have bequeathed to her by will. This little provision is, probably, the utmost she will ever obtain from any of her father's family. But, my good Doctor, I have yet ventured to name no trustees. My youngest son, Col. Cleveland, is now abroad, and cannot at present act; but hereafter he may be a kind friend to her, and afford her a refuge in his house. Meanwhile, might I entreat *you* to become one of her guardians? and would you, on proper considerations, permit me to name you as the person under whose superintendency I should wish her to be brought up? I know that I am making a strange request; that you have a large family, and many weighty and important avocations. Yet this child's inevitable misery, if left solely to the protection of her alienated father, grieves me to the heart—oppresses and sinks me to the earth. He will either send her to some remote school, trusting her health, her happiness, her morals, to chance; or if he suffers her to reside with him, it will be merely to wink at her becoming the victim of her

brother's arbitrary temper—the sad witness of her own unimportance in a father's eyes! Take compassion upon her, my worthy friend. No opposition will be made to your assuming the charge; for my infatuated son, alas! will be rejoiced to be relieved from any thought upon the subject. Go home, and consult with your excellent wife; and if you *can* to-morrow bring me information that she and you accede to my wishes, my approaching end will lose its terrors, and I shall be ready to exclaim—'The bitterness of death is past!'"

"Thus," concluded Dr. Hampden, "thus, my dear Hannah, have I given you a faithful account of the long conference I held with this excellent lady. I see that the latter part of the recital has agitated and perplexed you. Take a day or two for consideration, before you come to any positive determination. I am perfectly aware, that in your present situation, the proposal of encreasing your cares, by the introduction of a new inmate, must shock and affright you. But make this reflection; and perhaps it may diminish your surprise at my hazarding the proposal, and remove

your reluctance to comply with it. Algernon Mordington is now nearly thirteen, and as he is destined for the army, it is not improbable that his uncle may speedily wish to withdraw him from our protection, in order to place him where he may obtain better instruction in the duties of a soldier's life. Indeed I have long wondered at the estrangement to which he dooms him, and felt inclined to condemn the narrow plan of education to which he has been confined."

"Do you think then," cried Mrs. Hampden, with tears in her eyes, "that the prospect of losing Algernon will reconcile me to the admission of this little Miss Cleveland? What will *she* be to me? How wil *she* supply to any of us the place of the noble boy, whose departure you speak of so coolly? Indeed, Dr. Hampden, I am hurt to find you have so little value for him! I thought you loved him almost as well as I do myself; and, Heaven knows, he is as dear to me as—I had nearly said—any of my own children."

"My good woman," resumed the doctor, kindly pressing his hand upon her shoulder,

"I adore you for this warmth of heart, and share in all your affectionate sentiments for poor Mordington. But you will allow, that if he *is* to be recalled, his departure, by reducing the number of your family, will consequently diminish your cares."

"I never murmured at any cares, any trouble of which he was the object," answered Mrs. Hampden. "Whenever he goes—and goes too, in order to be made a soldier—it will be like lopping off from me a limb! He is the joy and life of the house; he has a better heart, and a sweeter temper than I almost ever met with in any human being. I am sure *he* loves us dearly; and how do we know that your little Miss Cleveland will ever care a rush about us?"

"Well, well," said the doctor, smiling, "go up to bed now, Goody, and think this matter coolly over in the morning."

"I shall think of nothing but your threat that Algernon is to leave us, and become a soldier. Please the Lord, none of my own boys shall ever, with my consent, take to *that* trade!"

CHAP. IV.

EMPLOYMENT.

Two days after this conversation, Dr. Hampden being sent for to a patient at the distance of thirty miles, and judging it probable, that from the nature of the case, his absence might be of unusual duration, wrote a note, previous to his departure, to Mrs. Cleveland, upon whom he was too much hurried to call, and detaining Algernon from morning school, made him the bearer of it to his venerable patient.

The doctor wrote as follows:

"I am summoned, my dear Madam, so abruptly from home, that I have no time to wait upon you in person, as I fully intended, to inform you that my excellent wife, after mature deliberation, consents to the introduction of the little inmate whom you propose to us, and solemnly engages to perform towards her, the part of a careful and vigilant parent. Make, of my name, in the

disposition of your affairs, whatever use will afford you most comfort. I shall scrupulously and conscientiously fulfil the duties, be they of what nature they may, which you shall chuse to confide to my integrity; and only hope that my abilities may be equal to my zeal in the discharge of the office for which you have selected me.

"These hasty lines will be delivered to you by one whom I am proud to introduce to your notice, as the deserving object of Mrs. Hampden's anxious care and affection; as well as of my own, during the course of the last seven years. His name is Mordington: you probably know the noble family to which he is allied.

"I have the honour to be,

"With the utmost respect,

"Dear madam,

"Your obliged and devoted humble servant,

"FRANCIS HAMPDEN."

Algernon Mordington, on his arrival at Mrs. Cleveland's gate, told the servant who opened it, that he brought a note from Dr. Hampden, which he was desired, if his lady was up, to deliver into her own hands. He was ushered into a little parlour, whilst

the man went to enquire whether he could be admitted. He speedily returned; said his mistress was at breakfast in the dressing-room; and begged the young visitor to walk up.

Algernon followed his conductor; and after delivering the object of his mission to the lady of the house, who recollected his countenance, and received him with an encouraging and benevolent smile, he directed his attention towards the other individuals in the room, and soon found himself considerably interested in the scrutiny.

Opposite to Mrs. Cleveland, and at the same table, sat a little girl, pale and thin, who, from a small bason of bread and milk, provided for her own breakfast, was liberally supplying the importunate demands of a lively little dog, who neither moderate nor scrupulous, partook with her of more than half her portion. Immediately behind her, stood the personage the most striking to Mordington's unaccustomed observation, of any in the group. This was the worthy Amy, whose figure, short and squab, might have excited some risibility, had it not been repressed by the profound duskiness

of her skin; and the extraordinary, and to him, perfectly novel cast, of her broad-spreading features. The countenance, however, invested with so sable a hue, displeased less than it diverted—repulsed less than it attracted him. Its expression was so congenial to his own gay nature—so mirthful, yet so gentle, that he felt an immediate impression of cordial good-will in her favour.

When Mrs. Cleveland had finished the perusal of the doctor's note, which appeared to give her extreme satisfaction, she politely asked Mordington to partake of their breakfast. He thanked her but declined it; and then begged to know whether he was to wait for any answer to the letter, of which he had been the bearer.

" Are you acquainted, young gentleman," said Mrs. Cleveland, " with its truly satisfactory purport?"

" No, madam, not at all."

" Adela, my dear," resumed the old lady, after a moment's pause, " if you have quite given away enough of your breakfast to Frisk, you may go and play in the garden; Amy will attend you."

The little girl slid down from her chair, and taking Amy's hand, left the room; followed, to the regret of Algernon, by Frisk.

"That child," said Mrs. Cleveland, when they were gone, 'is my grand-daughter. She is, as you may perceive by her pallid complexion, in no very good state of health: her spirits are as weak as her frame; but her disposition is excellent. I am, it grieves me to say it, almost her only friend. She has been denied a mother's protection, nearly from her birth; and she has lived with me so long, that to her father she is little less than a stranger. You may wonder, perhaps, Mr. Mordington, why I should trouble you with all these particulars: the reason is, that I am extremely desirous to awaken in you some interest for this poor little unsupported creature. I understand you are, and for some time longer, may continue to be, a resident in Dr. Hampden's family. I have solicited, and obtained from the worthy doctor, permission to leave my grandchild in trust with him, at my own decease. —You see in me, my good young friend,

an aged, and infirm individual, who knows, and is resigned to the idea, that she has not long to live. My chief solicitude, for a considerable time past, has been for the future welfare of my helpless little charge: that is now removed, by the kindness of your benevolent guardian and his wife. But may I, when reflecting upon *their* promised attention, chear myself with the idea, that *you* also, and the doctor's youthful family, will be good and indulgent to my timid girl? Will you be a friend and protector to her? In her childish distresses, will you support and comfort her? Will you make allowances for her little faults, and consider, and teach your other associates to consider her as a friendless stranger, to whom gentleness and encouragement are equally due with hospitality and good manners?"

To Algernon Mordington, so serious a speech had never before been addressed; nor a charge given of half so much importance. Yet he fully understood, and his generous heart felt every word of the anxious discourse, which he was proud to find himself thought sufficiently a man to

have called forth. With the most animated earnestness, and with glowing cheeks, he answered—

"In all that I am able—as well as I know how—I will serve and be a constant friend to her."

Mrs. Cleveland, with a smile of the purest benevolence, whilst, at the same time, a tear started to her eye, extended towards him her hand, saying—

"I thank you—from the bottom of my heart I thank you, for this frank and cordial assurance. Your countenance prepared me to expect a favourable reception to my petition. I wish my poor Adela had just such a brother—I wish that she was assured of always possessing such a protector: but, however, you will befriend her whilst you are under the same roof; and for her sake, I hope it will be long ere you are removed. I would now proceed to introduce you to her as her destined companion; but she is shy to a painful excess; and dreadfully afraid of every new face: you must endeavour therefore to get acquainted with her by degrees; and, mean-

while, I depend upon you for procuring her a kind welcome from the little Hampdens."

"Oh, they are all so good tempered, I am sure they will do every thing they can to make her happy."

"Well, my dear, I will not detain you longer at present. Whenever I am well enough to see any body, I shall be glad to see you. Make my kindest and most grateful compliments to Mrs. Hampden; tell her, that had not writing been peculiarly painful to me, I would have addressed my thanks to her by letter. I shall be favoured with a visit from her husband, I hope, as soon as he returns; much yet remains to be arranged with him respecting this little girl's establishment beneath his roof; there are days when I am unable to converse at all. I trust, however, that Heaven will spare me, till all that relates to her affairs is clearly and satisfactorily terminated. Good day, my young friend;—take with you my blessing and my thanks."

Algernon, much affected by her kindness,

respectfully received her offered hand; bowed with an air of grateful sensibility, and without speaking, departed.

He found that his return had been impatiently watched for, and expected, by the whole youthful party. Mrs. Hampden had communicated the tidings of Miss Cleveland's approaching admission into their family; and they were all eager to learn whether Algernon had seen her, and what was the impression her appearance had made upon him. But he was in no humour to gratify their curiosity, till he had disburthened his mind of some part of the veneration with which it was filled for Mrs. Cleveland. He spoke of her with feeling and concern; described her dying but placid looks — the benevolence of her expressions, and the softness of her manners, till his own eyes glistened, and the children all stood mute, attentive, and deeply interested in the unaffected energy of his relation.

"I wish," continued he, "she was in good health, and my own grandmother! But I have not a female relation in the world who cares a straw for me. My poor

sister was such a baby when I left her, that I dare say she hardly knows she *has* a brother."

"When she *does* know you," cried Mrs. Hampden, "I make no doubt she will prove to you as affectionate a sister as you can desire."

"I hope so with all my heart; but, you know, dear mother, all *that* is as it may happen; so, as it is of no use to think of it now, I'll tell you what I can about little Miss Cleveland. She looks as sickly and thin as I can suppose *I* was when I first came here. I believe she has very pretty eyes, though; but they seem too large for her face. Her grandmother says, she is a good little soul; and she hopes we shall all like her, and try to make her comfortable. But what I want most t tell you about, is a young black woman, who was waiting upon them at breakfast. Oh, she is the most delightful piece of ugliness I ever beheld! She never looks at you without a grin; she has teeth as white as snow; lips as thick as the broad wheel of a waggon; a fine fleece of black wool upon her head, and so comical a countenance, that

she almost tempted me to give her the preference in my good graces, to the former object of my devotion, old Nurse Brown."

The children, though much entertained by this account of honest Amy, were, however, unanimous in supporting the prior claims of their long established favourite, old Nurse Brown; and Algernon, to appease them, promised to let no upstart dispossess her of her accustomed place in his heart.

When this matter was settled, Mrs. Hampden led the way to the apartment, which she meditated to assign to their expected little guest; and very ingeniously contrived to find employment for each of the children of an age to *be* employed, till dinner time. Ruth was directed to sew a new fringe to the bottom of a window-curtain; Judith, the next sister, was dispatched for her little thread-case, to make a white dimity cover for the toilet pincushion; and even Algernon, as it was now too late to send him to join William and Reuben Hampden at morning school, was not exempted from taking his share in the occu-

pations that were going forward. As being the tallest, he was directed to remove from a high shelf in an adjoining closet, a pile of old newspapers, pamphlets, reviews and magazines, which, when allowed time to peep into their contents, afforded him sufficient amusement, to reconcile him to their dustiness, and almost to appease his anxiety, again to resume his intercourse with Hotspur and Glendower.

Whilst thus furnishing occupation for others, Mrs. Hampden was by no means idle herself. She was fitting to a huge old-fashioned arm chair, a chintz cover, to all appearance, not many years its junior; but so neatly repaired, and still so bright in hue, that it was as much the admiration of the little girls, as the pride of their industrious mother.

CHAP. V.

TIMIDITY.

Mrs. Cleveland lived only a fortnight after the conference with young Mordington recorded in the preceding chapter: but happily, Dr. Hampden returned from his distant professional visit, in time to receive her final directions respecting her grandchild; and to hear confirmed, in her presence, Mr. Cleveland's consentt o his assuming the guardianship, to which she had appointed him. It was also settled, that the interest of the child's little fortune, should, for the present, be suffered to accumulate; that her father should pay annually a stipulated sum for her board and education; and that Amy, to whom her considerate mistress left a small annuity, should, if she wished it, continue her attendance upon Adela; and reside with her, at Mr. Cleveland's expence, in Dr. Hampden's family.

With infinite difficulty, and after repeated interruptions, Mrs. Cleveland, previous to her decease, addressed to her two eldest grand-daughters, Elinor and Alicia; the half-sisters of Adela, a short letter, which she entrusted for delivery at some future time, to the care of Dr. Hampden. It was conceived in these words—

"My dear grandchildren,

"I WRITE from a bed of pain, whence I have now no hope of living to arise. My last earthly cares are for the welfare of your little helpless sister; the poor child, whom, four years ago, your father permitted me to take under my protection. Since thatp eriod, you have scarcely seen her; and you may, perhaps, require to be reminded of her claims upon your kindness. Some years probably will elapse, ere you meet her again: but cherish the remembrance of her in your hearts; befriend her, hereafter, if it should ever be in your power, and forget not, how very dear she was to one, who also loved you both most affectionately; and whose dying request it was, that you would prove yourselves, in the fullest sense of the word, her sisters.

"I have now only strength and sight, with my final blessing, to sign myself, my dearest children,

"Your fervent well-wisher, and ever-attached grandmother,

"A. M. Cleveland."

The day succeeding the funeral of the writer of this letter, the dejected little Adela made her first *entrée* in the family of her new patrons. She had been detained till that moment in the house of mourning at the solicitation of Julius; who, learning that his father was determined not to quit it himself, before his mother's remains were consigned to the grave, thought his sister's presence, and that of Amy, might afford him some relief from the gloominess that surrounded him; and, for the first time, appeared to attach a slight degree of value to their society.

It was evening, when her father's carriage conveyed the fearful child, her affectionate attendant, and the sprightly Frisk, to the residence of Dr. Hampden. On hearing it drive up, Ruth, and the rest of the young party, Algernon excepted, would have rushed out to meet their ex-

pected companion: but Mrs. Hampden desired them to remain quiet, asserting that the sudden eruption of so many entire strangers, would terrify and overpower her. The remonstrance was patiently submitted to—and they all peaceably returned to their seats.

In a few moments, steps were heard in the entrance, the parlour door was opened by a maid servant, and in capered the alert and familiar Frisk.

A general exclamation of delight followed his appearance; and whichever way he turned, he was welcomed and caressed with the most unbounded testimonies of approbation. Even the Doctor and Mrs. Hampden were drawn to participate, though with somewhat less enthusiasm, in the admiration he excited; and for some seconds it seemed to be utterly forgotten that any other guest than Frisk was expected. Mordington was the first to cast his eyes towards the door, where, startled and astonished at their vociferation, stood the unobtrusive little stranger, pressing close up to Amy, and tightly clasping her hand as if for protection from the noisy host—

"My dear mother," said Algernon, "won't you speak to Miss Cleveland?" Mrs. Hampden turned round, and, afraid of being too demonstrative, told the child in simple but cordial terms, that she was glad to see her; begged she would go and sit down; and gratified Amy by desiring she would remain near her young mistress. The children had discretion enough at first to keep aloof; but their eyes busily surveyed the downcast aspect of the abashed new-comer, or gazed with amazement at the dark complexion of her humble friend.

Ruth at length gained courage, under pretence of fondling Frisk, (who, satisfied with the notice his outset had obtained, now rested quietly at the feet of his mistress,) to cross over to the place where Adela was sitting upon Amy's knees, and to establish herself upon a low stool, close beside them. Amy, nearly as much prepossessed by the blooming, sparkling countenance of Ruth, as she had, during his visit to her departed lady, been by that of Algernon, very readily contributed her share towards the conversation which the little girl seemed desirous of commencing;

and tried, but without much success, to induce her young charge to bear some part in it also: but the bashful little creature, though now evidently recovered from her first apprehensive feelings, could not be prevailed upon to utter more than a monosyllable at a time, and that in so low a voice as scarcely to be heard. Yet she shrunk not entirely from the notice and caresses of her new friend, but suffered her little hand to be detained without any apparent reluctance; and now and then bestowed a soft smile upon her, that threw the warm-hearted Ruth into raptures. The advances of Algernon, who had also ventured to approach, she bore, however, with less serenity; his touch she recoiled from, with a sort of antipathy; if he merely looked at her, she averted her eyes; his vicinity seemed to disturb her; nor could she even composedly endure to see him take the slightest notice of her faithful Frisk.

Amy was perfectly able to account for these symptoms of uneasiness: but in Ruth they excited equal surprise and concern. Though by no means disposed to feel offended, she was nevertheless hurt that the

kind attentions of Mordington should be so perseveringly discouraged; and found the pleasure she had at first experienced, in seeking to conciliate the favour of the young stranger, considerably diminished.

In a short time the children's supper was brought in, of which Adela was invited to partake. She declined it, in a whisper addressed to Amy; and before they had concluded their slight meal, reposed her head upon the negro's bosom, and dropped into a calm sleep.

Mrs. Hampden had given orders that a fire should be kept up in the room appropriated to her; and thither, without being awakened, she was gently conveyed in Amy's arms, and put to bed. Frisk attended her, and as soon as she was laid down, established himself for the night upon a chair by her side.

"Well, mamma," said Ruth, as soon as her mother descended from the child's room; "how do you like the little girl? She looks very mild and gentle; but I never saw any thing so fearful in my life: she thinks, I believe, that Algernon will eat her; and pale as she is, turns ten times

paler, if he only touches the hem of her frock. What an odd whim that is!"

"Have patience with her," said Mrs. Hampden, "and don't expect her to be familiar all at once with so many unknown faces. She has lately lost a fond grandmother, and been suddenly removed to a place where every person, and every object is entirely new to her. Give way for the present to her little shy humours; do not shew any impatience or vexation; and, as much as you can, without appearing to neglect her, give her full liberty to come and go, talk, or be silent, as she pleases."

"This," cried Mordington, "is just what poor Mrs. Cleveland would have recommended. I am sorry I did not let her quite alone this evening, for I believe I distressed her: but to-morrow, I'll try and avoid even looking at her. One comfort is," added he, laughing, "that poor, dear, pretty Blacky won't require any courting at all to be good friends: she smirks and noddles already as facetiously as if she had known us this twelvemonth. How I do love her short, shining, hideous face; and her droll eyes, that look like two ripe elder-berries stuck in the white of a hard egg!"

"Well, well," cried Mrs. Hampden, "learn your lesson for school to-morrow, and save some of your wit for another time: and be sure when you go up to bed, you make no noise over the little girl's room."

He promised observance of this injunction; conned over rapidly, three or four times, his morning task; and then, as well as Dr. Hampden, turned to his Shakspeare for the remainder of the evening.

When the little Adela descended to breakfast the next morning, though there appeared no abatement in her gravity, she looked, at least, perfectly placid: and, unless assailed with questions by the younger children, or particularly noticed by any of the party, seemed sufficiently at her ease, and completely bereft of alarm. Algernon, to avoid disturbing, what the doctor termed, her *insecure security*, wholly abstained from speaking to, or regarding her.

When breakfast was over, Mrs. Hampden gave her two eldest girls permission, as it was a very beautiful morning, to walk across the fields, with Mordington and their brothers, a part of the way, at least, towards the school to which the boys were

regularly sent. They eagerly prepared themselves for the excursion; whilst their mother, addressing Adela, asked if she would like, attended by Amy, to be of the party?

"It will do you good, my dear," added she; "air and exercise have been particularly recommended for you, and will make you look as fresh as a rose. Shall Amy bring your little straw hat?"

In one of her accustomed whispers, when, though her lips might be seen to move, it was scarcely possible to catch any audible sound proceeding from them, the child faintly answered,

"If you please, ma'am."

"But, my dear," resumed Mrs. Hampden, somewhat perplexed on observing with how little alacrity her proposal was accepted, "don't go merely to oblige me: perhaps you had rather walk about the garden with only Amy."

The little creature, with brightening looks, eagerly caught hold of Amy, saying softly,

"I had rather walk with only Amy, if you please."

The kind matron smiled at the simple sincerity of this answer, and bade her run up with her nurse to fetch her hat.

Algernon, looking after her as she quitted the room, said,

"I love her for being so fond of Blacky; but yet I should like to decoy Frisk away from her: I dare say, he would much rather gambol and scamper about in the fields, than be confined to an old woman's walk in the garden."

"Let me, however, have no decoying attempted," said Mrs. Hampden. "Frisk will do very well under the care of his little mistress; and indeed, to speak the truth, I have so good an opinion of him, that I hardly believe he would be readily induced to quit her."

When Adela returned to the house, some time after the juvenile party had set out, she found Mrs. Hampden employed in hearing two of her youngest children, the one six, the other only four years old, read their little lessons. For a moment she hesitated whether or not to advance; but receiving a sign of encouragement, she stole softly towards one of the windows, and

quietly remained observing all that was passing till the children were released.

Shortly after, Ruth and Judith came back; and Mrs. Hampden, who never would consent to send any of her girls to school, and was their sole preceptress, called upon them both to go through their daily task. Each produced her little spelling-book and Testament; and each, in an audible voice, spelt a column, and read a chapter. She then proceeded to place their writing copies before them, and furnishing them with the requisite implements, enjoined them diligently to exert themselves for one half-hour, in trying which could produce the neatest specimen of penmanship.

Mrs. Hampden, though incapable of giving to her daughters accomplishments which she did not in the slightest degree herself possess, was yet better qualified for the task of instructing them in such plain and useful acquirements as she undertook to teach, than half the mothers or governesses who engage in the attempt. She had an almost inexhaustible fund of patience; was strictly impartial; had a clear method of explaining what she exacted; was un-

failingly persevering; and had a mild yet inflexible firmness of manner, that scarcely ever gave the children an opportunity of eluding her commands, or disappointing her expectations.

Not a single circumstance that passed, escaped the silent observation of the watchful Adela. When the lessons were over, and the children, according as they had merited applause or censure, had received the one or incurred the other, she saw them, with the most cheerful docility, go in search of their work-bags, and for a specified time, establish themselves round their mother, and industriously begin plying their needles.

This scene of diligence appeared to fire her with emulation; for presently, gliding gently out of the room, she speedily returned, bearing in one hand a small work-basket, and in the other an immense jointed doll.

Mrs. Hampden, without seeming to regard her, yet attended to all her movements, and found some difficulty in repressing a smile, when she saw her select from her basket, such instruments of housewifery

as she thought she should want, and then, very gravely, place the low arm-chair that had been appropriated to her, next to Ruth, and begin hemming a petticoat for her doll.

This first symptom of approaching sociability gave the good Mrs. Hampden very sincere pleasure; but she carefully forbore making any remarks that should tempt the sensitive little plant to shrink back, and went on conversing with her children upon indifferent subjects.

It was impossible, indeed, to be many hours in the same house with this child without feeling for her an interest almost amounting to affection. Her countenance had so little of the common-place expression of mere rosy thoughtless infancy, that, on the contrary, it denoted both reflection and sensibility. Every time she raised her long thick eye-lashes, and looked up in Mrs. Hampden's face, it was with an air that seemed to solicit kindness and protection. The cast of her features was so delicate, and the clearness of her complexion so transparent, that there was an appearance of natural refinement about her, which, had an hundred other children been present,

would have distinguished her from them all; her voice, without being either monotonous or insipid, was sweetness itself; and so perfect was the symmetry of her pliant and slender little figure, that nothing could be more gratifying to the eye, than to watch the unconscious gracefulness of her movements when in action, or of her attitudes when in repose.

When the signal was given to the little girls to desist from their work, and it had been neatly folded up and put away, they flocked round their young companion to admire her huge doll.

She betrayed no uneasiness on observing their eagerness to handle it, but pushing it towards them, and addressing the two eldest girls with an air of good-will, she said,

"You may play with it, if you like."

"May we?" cried Ruth. "And will you play with us?"

Adela shook her head, and mildly but gravely answered,

"No, I thank you."

And taking up her basket, she quitted the room, and repaired to her friend Amy.

The spirits of this too susceptible child, though naturally high, had been subdued nearly beyond the possibility of speedy restoration, by the scenes which, for many weeks, she had sorrowfully witnessed.

Mrs. Cleveland, the most attentive and affectionate of parents, fallen into a state of incurable languor, and drooping so visibly, that even to the unexperienced observation of a child, the rapid decay of her strength was apparent; her father, though respectfully attentive to the poor invalid, utterly negligent of his daughter, or disposed to regard her only with scorn and sternness; her brother usurping over her unlimited authority, and exercising his capricious tyranny with fearless impunity; her sickly looks made subjects of reproach; her depressed state of mind derided; her intellects avowedly considered as defective—what wonder is it, that at so tender an age, all energy, all animation of character should desert her?

In addition to the benumbing influence which the above causes produced upon her faculties, her nerves had recently sustained

a shock (unknown to all but Amy) capable of leaving upon a youthful imagination an impression the most gloomy and awful.

During the two last days of her suffering grandmother's existence, the nurses and attendants deemed it necessary to prohibit the child's admission into the sick-room. This interdiction almost broke her heart, and but for the soothings and sympathizing tenderness of Amy, would have been a heavier affliction than she could have supported.

Perpetually on the watch, however, to obtain, if possible, a favourable opportunity of gaining a moment's access to the bed-side of her only friend, she stole softly, towards the evening of the third day of her painful seclusion, to the forbidden door. It was the fourth or fifth attempt of the same kind which she had made since morning, and on each occasion, after a long pause of almost breathless anxiety, with her hand upon the lock, she had been compelled to retreat by the sound of voices or footsteps within, which convinced her the attendants were all in waiting. Amy had been privy to these repeated trials; no arguments being of weight sufficient to convince her that it

could be either right or pardonable to debar an affectionate child from the sight of her parent, as long as that parent continued in possession of her senses; and acting upon this principle, she even ventured to become the companion of her young mistress's intrusion.

To the child's unspeakable delight, she not only escaped all observation in her way to the patient's chamber, but on reaching it, distinguished no sound within, which, she thought, need withhold her from endeavouring to enter. She tried the handle of the door, which gave way with perfect ease; and advancing on tip-toe, and with a beating heart, she proceeded some paces towards the bed.

The profound silence that reigned in the apartment—now in the decline of a cloudy autumnal evening, so faintly lighted as scarcely to render objects discernible; the deserted state in which her benefactress appeared to have been left; and above all, the undefinable apprehensions that seized upon her mind, and filled it with vague but solemn emotions—all chilled her heart, and for some moments arrested her steps. A whisper from Amy,

who stood centinel at the door, and urged her to lose no time, lest they should be surprised, impelled her again to move forward. She drew nearer to the curtains, and gently opening them, on the side next the window, the ever-venerated and ever-dear countenance of Mrs. Cleveland presented itself to her view, overspread by a paleness so cadaverous, exhibiting an immobility so appalling, that the unhappy child, half conscious of her misfortune, though ignorant of the appearance, and of all except the name of death, stood trembling and awed at the sight—too much terrified to cry out, too much amazed to seek refuge in flight from so direful a spectacle! Her heart almost audibly throbbed—her eyes seemed fixed by fascination upon the livid object on which they glared; and whilst thus standing as if spell-bound and rooted to the spot, accidentally moving her hand, it came in contact with that (icy-cold, stiff, and clammy) of the ghastly corpse! The shock was too great to be borne—she uttered a feeble though penetrating shriek, and sunk senseless on the bed.

Amy, upon whose affectionate vigilance no sound or movement of her youthful charge was ever lost, instantly caught the alarm, and darting towards her, discovered at a single glance, the deplorable cause of her insensibility. Though sincerely attached to the departed Mrs. Cleveland, she staid not to lament over her breathless form, but snatching the little Adela in her arms, had barely time to convey her from the room of death before the attendants resumed their station in the apartment.

The waking reflections, the nightly dreams of the fear-struck girl, after this unfortunate moment, were of a nature continually to recall the impressive scene to her harrowed imagination. She asked Amy no questions when she recovered from her fainting fit; her own observation, transient as it had been, having, beyond all possibility of doubt, taught her to know that the ghastly, pallid, inanimate figure which she had beheld, could be a representation of nothing but irrecoverable mortality. Yet she dreaded to hear the fact confirmed; dreaded to hear the word *death* applied to

one she had so tenderly loved; and from this cause, though the subject was ever uppermost in her mind, she made no communication of her thoughts, but, sad as they were, suffered them to prey in silence upon her health and spirits.

Amy not having been ordered to announce to her the fatal tidings, and being herself unwilling to enter upon a conversation so afflicting, the absolute certainty of the loss she had sustained was never communicated to the neglected child, till the day her mourning apparel was brought into her room. All the smothered emotions of her heart then burst forth, and she gave way to a paroxysm of grief, that frightened as much as it affected poor Amy, and produced, even in the thoughtless Julius, a temporary disposition to participate in her boundless sorrow.

Such had been, in addition to the indisposition that enfeebled her powers of exertion—to her father's cruel indifference, and to the loss of her protectress, the cause of that extreme depression which marked her whole deportment. Her sleep frequently

disturbed by starts; her innocent mind haunted, even at noon-day, by the most melancholy visions; the novelty of the scenes to which she had been introduced, had yet tended but in a very slight degree to relieve her from the weight that oppressed and weakened her infant mind.

CHAP. VI.

QUIXOTISM.

However gradually, the passive and forbearing system pursued by the Hampden family in regard to their little inmate, failed not, in process of time, to produce a favourable change in her aspect and manners. After silently attending, for three successive mornings, to the proceedings of the other children during their hours of study, she voluntarily, on the fourth, brought her own book of easy lessons to Mrs. Hampden, and begged she would hear her read. More gratified by this unsolicited application than she chose to appear, Mrs. Hampden quietly assented; and was equally pleased and surprised to find that she not only read with perfect fluency, but, for her age, with an intelligence so expressive, and a propriety of tone and accent so interesting, that she kept alive attention, and gave the most

pleasing effect to the little story she had chosen.

Mrs. Hampden too easily guessed by whom she had been thus admirably instructed, to pain her by asking any questions: but when she closed her book, affectionately kissed her, and praised the manner in which she had acquitted herself.

Cheered and encouraged by this kindness, the child now said—

"I can repeat some hymns and fables too, ma'am;—will you like to hear me?"

Receiving a ready assent to the question, she recited her little store of religious and moral poetry, in a voice so touching, and with a look so innocent, so unaffectedly earnest, that she brought tears into the eyes of her auditress. Again she was embraced, and commended for her successful efforts; and then Mrs. Hampden asked her whether she had any wish to learn to write? She promptly answered in the affirmative; and from that day forward, became an active and pleased emulator of the industry of her young companions.

In the same unconstrained manner, she gradually accustomed herself to pursue

most of their habits; and soon evinced a very perceptible increase of confidence in all the female branches of the family. But the presence of Dr. Hampden never failed to recall into her countenance its original shyness; and of his two eldest boys, as well as of Algernon, she betrayed such manifest distrust and apprehension, that with one accord, they agreed wholly to refrain from taking any notice of her.

Not so was it with regard to Amy. Towards Mordington, who particularly courted her, she conceived sentiments the most friendly and cordial. Extremely dextrous, and full of good-natured ingenuity, she wove baskets for him of reeds, or slender willow twigs; assisted him in stuffing his balls, or constructing his bows and arrows; made nets for various purposes, and with pieces of elder-wood, fabricated such powerful *pop-guns*, that their report might be heard from one extremity of the garden to the other.

In the upper part of the house was a large and unoccupied chamber, chiefly used as a place to deposit lumber, and yet so spacious, that, in rainy weather, it made an

admirable play-room for the youthful family. On every wet half-holiday, the boys, dragging Amy with them, and followed by their sisters, repaired to this privileged scene of noise and amusement. Adela hated to enter their territories; yet, rather than submit to a long separation from her nurse, she sometimes diffidently crept after them,—stole into a corner with Frisk, and was a silent spectatress of their pastimes.

One evening, that Algernon had been successively wrestling with William and Reuben, by neither of whom he had been conquered, though by their alternate efforts he had been wearied; suddenly desisting, and throwing himself on a seat to take breath, he invited Frisk, by a friendly whistle, to share his resting-place. Adela was now too much accustomed to witness their intimacy, to feel any alarm for the safety of the little animal; but her eyes filled with tears on hearing Mordington presently exclaim—

"Why, Nursy, what has given this poor dog such a vile disposition, every now and then, to hop upon three legs? Has he ever received any hurt?"

"Oh, Massa, better not ask about it," cried Amy, "it no good story."

"Why, it was not done on purpose, was it, Nurse?" enquired Ruth.

"It was done—well, well, never mind how it was done! You say a great deal about it, you vex little Missy."

The children all looked inquisitively at Adela, and saw her face exhibiting such a painful air of consciousness, that, for a moment, they were tempted to suspect, that it was by her the mischief had been perpetrated. Amy, aware, from the expression of their countenances, of what was passing in their minds, hesitated not to clear her beloved charge, by instantly revealing the truth.

William, Reuben, and their good-tempered sisters, expressed, in the strongest terms, their abhorrence of so mischievous an excess of passion; but Algernon, though he said the least, was struck with a deeper sense of indignation than any of the party; and, to judge by the anger that flashed from his eyes, felt as if he would have rejoiced in an opportunity of inflicting upon the young culprit the most exemplary chastisement. One observation escaped him, that

shewed the good sense with which he could already trace effects from their causes.

"I can understand now," said he, "what has made Miss Cleveland so shy of William, Reuben, and me. I suppose she thinks all boys are alike; and as Frisk had his *legs* disabled at home, expects that here he will lose his *head!*"

"No, no," exclaimed Amy;—"Little Missy no think that at all,—Massa Julius have quite different face;—he sometimes have so proud, so fierce look! And he so love to command; and if he play, he so glad to tease, tease, and make vexed!—Oh, no; he no more like you, than blacky like whitey!"

Algernon laughed, and, thanking Amy for her reluctance to allow of the resemblance, started up, and called upon the two boys to assist him in suspending a swing to a beam that ran across the ceiling.

This little conversation, the remembrance of which seemed to operate favourably upon the mind of Adela, and in a slight degree to abate her reserve towards Mordington and his companions, was succeeded, a few days after, by an incident which,

however trifling in itself, effected a still more material change in all her sentiments.

Returning home with the two Hampdens from afternoon school, one exceedingly wet, cold, and boisterous evening, Algernon was surprised, as he approached the house, to see Adela and the nurse standing under the porch, the former, utterly regardless of the rain that drifted upon her head, and appearing in great distress; and the latter, vainly exerting all her powers of rhetoric to persuade her young charge no longer to expose herself to the, so nearly certain, risk of catching cold.

"What is the matter?" enquired Algernon, concerned to perceive them in such uneasiness.

"Oh, good young Massa!" exclaimed Amy, delighted at his return, "Will you make little Missy not stand here, and get all wet and cold? And me go bring back Frisk."

"Is Frisk lost, then?"

Amy answered, that a short time before, a woman and two boys, who appeared to be travellers, had come to the door to beg; that Mrs. Hampden was gone to see a sick

neighbour, but that Adela observing them from the window, stepped out to give them some relief from her own little fund. Frisk had accompanied her—and now was no where to be found! The nurse, concluding he had been stolen by the wandering petitioners, was anxious to attempt his recovery, by setting out immediately in pursuit of them.

"Which way did they go?" eagerly demanded Mordington.

Amy pointed in the direction she believed they had taken; and the animated boy, pushing her and Adela into the passage, only stopped to say,

"Nursy, my friend, go and comfort yourself by a good fire, and leave the rescue of poor Frisk to me."

"Then, darting off, he was out of sight in a moment. William Hampden hastily followed him; and Amy, with her distressed little charge, went back into the house.

Recollecting to have met, in his way home, a party that strongly resembled the description of the supposed offenders, Mordington was sanguine in his hopes of succeeding, by the tender of a little money, in

recovering the dog, could he but fortunately accomplish his wish of overtaking them. It happened that, of the frugal allowance granted him for pocket money, (anxiously desiring to purchase a writing-desk which he had seen upon sale in the neighbouring town of S——,) he had saved nearly the whole of the last quarter; and this money he now carried about him. In comparison to the loss of Frisk, the loss of the money was to him as nothing: and, on coming up with the strollers, which he happily effected, so ably did he conduct his enterprize, and so successfully win upon their hearts, partly by his offered bribe, and partly by his gay yet earnest entreaties, that the woman was unable to resist his prayers, and, at length, consented to release the astonished Frisk from the dirty old sack in which he had been immured, and to restore him to honourable society.

Bounding, frolicking, and wild with joy, the newly-emancipated prisoner attended his delighted deliverer home, and reached Dr. Hampden's door, in company with William, who shared in their satisfaction, a few minutes after the family (under some

anxiety for the young Quixote) had assembled to tea.

His entrance, preceded, rather than followed, by the almost despaired-of Frisk, was hailed with a general cry of transport; and Adela, in particular, forgetting all fear, and dismissing all coldness, flew past the dog, and springing upon a chair, threw her little arms round Algernon's neck, and embraced him with the frank and joyful fondness of the most affectionate sister. Charmed by a reception so unexpectedly kind, Mordington encouraged and returned her caresses, whilst the Doctor and Mrs. Hampden sat by, and smiled at this novel scene with the sincerest pleasure.

Thus vanished (and for ever) all distrust on the part of Adela, and all affectation of indifference on that of Algernon; and, from this period, a cordiality established itself between them, which cheered the heart and brightened the countenance of the little girl, as much as it gratified and flattered her new friend.

Learning the next day, by means of William, the method he had employed to gain his point with the fraudulent intercepters of

poor Frisk, it became her most earnest desire to offer him some compensation for the sacrifice he had made. She possessed, in addition to the friendship of Amy, only two objects of particular regard; one was a little gold watch, which she was yet too young to wear, but often contemplated with admiration in its case; and the other was —Frisk! — Whichever of these Algernon could be induced to accept, she pined to offer him: but her courage failed, and it was only through the intervention of Amy, that she dared hazard the proposal.

The disinterested and perfectly undesigning boy, shrunk from the idea of taking such advantage of her gratitude, with the steadiest inflexibility: but hearing from the nurse, that Adela really fretted at his perseverance in refusing her intended liberality, he came to a compromise with her; declined all concern with the watch, but consented so far to look upon Frisk as his own, as to make him the constant companion of his rambles; and to suffer his initials, as well as Adela's, to be engraven upon the little silver plate of the dog's collar.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hampden, with unabated ardour, was continuing the perusal of his borrowed Shakespeare. The mania for that author which had so enthusiastically seized him, was strengthened by the warm participation of Mordington. They read and talked of nothing but Shakespeare; the quick and retentive memory of the lively boy was soon furnished with whole scenes from his favourite plays: every speech uttered by Percy he, in particular, delighted to spout forth; and by this means, so incurably confirmed the doctor's prepossession, as to induce him, at length, seriously to declare, that if the babe, whose birth was now hourly expected, proved a boy, it should indubitably receive the honourable appellation of—Hotspur!

This project, as has already been related, was opposed by poor Mrs. Hampden with all the earnestness which she thought it justifiable to exert; and, by Algernon, was heard with convulsions of internal laughter. The worthy matron's solemn protest against a breach of custom which appeared to her so unseemly; her husband's incomprehen-

sible warmth upon the subject; and the strange effect which such a braggadocio sort of name would produce when contrasted with the primitive and peaceful denominations of the other children, amused him beyond description. He had the forbearance, however, to conceal his wicked risibility from the parents, contenting himself with forming eager wishes for the speedy arrival of the moment which was to decide the contest.

These wishes were gratified, and the birth of a fourth son was announced to the family about six weeks after the introduction into it of the little Adela. The joy excited throughout the whole household by the information of Mrs. Hampden's safety, gave honourable and unequivocal testimony of the affectionate estimation in which she was held. Amy, in spontaneous imitation of those who had longer experienced the happiness of residing with so good a mistress, displayed the utmost anxiety to render herself useful, either as nurse to the infant, or as attendant upon the mother; and by old Nurse Brown, now grown

infirm and incapable of much exertion, she was considered as a very valuable auxiliary. Adela, no longer confiding in Amy alone for protection and kindness, was well pleased that she should devote a portion of her time and thoughts to the service of others; and unaffectedly shared in her fondness for the future little Hotspur.

In the course of the first week that Mrs. Hampden was able to resume her station below stairs, the christening took place; and the doctor, abating somewhat of the rigour of his original decree, consented that the baby should receive the compound appellation of Hotspur-Benjamin! This incongruous combination, could not but have demolished the solemnity of a much graver philosopher than Mordington, and almost caused him to roll upon the floor with irrepressible laughter. On the risible faculties of Mrs. Hampden it operated by no means so ludicrously; though, on her ear, it grated no less harshly. She internally formed a firm resolution never to call the child by any other but his second, and, as she emphatically styled it, his really *chris-*

tian denomination; and, somewhat consoled by the reflexion that she had, at least, procured for him *one* name that merited to be so considered, she the more patiently submitted to the addition it was destined to receive.

CHAP. VII.

TEMPTATION.

WEEKS and months now rolled away in uninterrupted serenity, and the happy and deserving family of Dr. Hampden, flourishing in all its branches, presented to every benevolent observer the most gratifying picture of domestic concord, of parental and filial attachment and confidence. No mandate of recall arrived for Mordington. His uncle, Lord Ossely, occasionally wrote, and punctually paid his bills: but, by his silence on the subject of Algernon's removal to a higher school, he proved, that whatever had once been his intentions in favour of the orphan boy, they were gradually superseded by increasing solicitude for the interest of his own children; and that, as demands upon his purse multiplied for *them*, the same demands were likely to be yearly more unwillingly attended to for *him*. Algernon had no personal remem-

brance of any of these relations: he held no correspondence with them; and, except when he reflected upon his long estrangement from his youthful sister, seldom bestowed upon them a moment's thought.

Adela's deserted state,—as her parents still survived—was yet more singular, and yet more pitiable. Mr. Cleveland, from the hour he had seen her enter the carriage which conveyed her to the good physician's, had never written a line concerning her, perhaps never suffered her to dwell two minutes in his remembrance. When the half-year's stipend became due for her board, it was remitted, as in former times it had been to her cottage-nurse, by his steward; —and Julius, slighting her with equal coldness, neither expressed any wish to behold her again, nor ever spoke of her to his half-sisters, but as of a crying, pale-faced, spiritless little creature, whom it made him melancholy to think about, and would weary him to death to live with.

The letter addressed to the Miss Clevelands, which had been confided to Dr. Hampden at their grandmother's decease, he had hitherto held back; judging that

the best time to deliver it would be, when Adela,—should that moment ever arrive,—was withdrawn from his protection, and sent for to inhabit her father's house. These young ladies, therefore, had few inducements to remember her; they had been told she was in respectable hands, and hoped that she was happy;—further, they neither knew, nor were very solicitous to enquire.

Happy, indeed, and unspeakably improved, in every respect, was the unrepining little exile. Called forth by encouragement, and by associating with cheerful beings of her own age, a gaiety frank, and sometimes almost wildly unrestrained, had taken place of the timidity and dejection which used to mark her voice and manners. Not a vestige of fear or sadness remained upon her face; it sparkled with unclouded vivacity; was blooming, open;—expressive of perfect confidence in all around her, and of the most genuine and unalterable good-humour. Algernon loved her beyond description; gratified her to the full extent of his power, in every wish of her merry little heart; and foretold continually, that she would be the completest beauty that

had ever existed. Mrs. Hampden exulted in the admirable effects produced, as she asserted and believed, by her own excellent management; the doctor was amused by the child's playful familiarity; and the younger members of the family all delighted in her, if not as the prime instigator, at least, as the most indefatigable partaker in every mirthful scheme, and in every ingenious frolic.

The winter passed, and Adela was returning, one morning, accompanied by Amy and Ruth, from S——, the town, much frequented for its sea-bathing, near which Dr. Hampden resided, when, just as the little party had entered a ferry-boat which was to convey them across a narrow creek, connected with the sea, that divided them from the fields adjoining to the doctor's house, a lady and gentleman, rapidly approaching the banks, desired the waterman to stop and take them in. The gentleman held the bridle of a beautiful poney, furnished with a side-saddle; and after his female companion had entered the boat, she asked the two little girls, in a soft voice, and with an air of kindness, whether it

would give them any alarm to permit the admission of her gentle courser. They both promptly answered, "None at all:" and the gentleman, stepping into the boat, quietly drew the poney after him.

Adela and Ruth, encouraged by his assurances that there could not possibly be a milder-tempered animal, ventured, during the short passage, repeatedly to pat and stroke him. Amy was rendered somewhat uneasy for her young charge, by this familiarity, and, two or three times, urged her to come away:—

"I am not afraid, Amy," said the child; "Grandmamma, you know, hired a poney for Julius, and I used often to feed him, and he never did me any harm."

"Who is Julius, my love?" enquired the lady.

"My brother, ma'am."

A short whispered dialogue now passed between the two strangers; and then, whilst the lady let down her veil, and suddenly seated herself, the gentleman said—

"Will you give me leave to ask—is your name Cleveland?"

"Yes, Sir."—And the little girl looked

much surprised, and gazed at them both with enquiring eyes, but without knowing in what words to express her curiosity.

There was a general silence in the boat for some seconds; the lady had turned her face away from the party, and leaning over the edge of the little vessel, seemed to be attentively contemplating the water. Her companion scrutinizingly regarded Adela; and, at length, entreating Amy to hold the bridle of the poney, he went and sat down by the lady, and conversed with her in a low voice, during a considerable period. They appeared to be both speaking with great earnestness. Adela and Ruth surveyed them with undefinable, but singular interest; they thought they could distinguish low sobs proceeding from the lady; and the murmuring tones of the gentleman seemed expressive of kindness and commiseration. After this scarcely audible dialogue had lasted some time, the stranger got up, and relieving Amy from the office she had undertaken, he said to Adela—

"That lady and I know something of your family, my dear; will you, then, per-

mit me now to ask you a few questions?—Where is now your brother?"

"With my father, I believe, sir, in London."

"And whom are you with here?"

"With Dr. and Mrs. Hampden; I have been with them almost eight months: they live close to that clump of tall trees on the other side of the meadow." And she pointed, as she spoke, to the clump, and seemed to contemplate with pleasure the neighbourhood of her cheerful home.

"Are you happy at Dr. Hampden's?"

"Oh, I never was so happy any where in my whole life! I have five or six play-fellows—this is one of them," shewing Ruth; "her name is Ruth Hampden; I love her as if she were my sister:—and she has two or three brothers, very good-natured boys; and there is, besides, Algernon Mordington, the best of them all! I wish you could see Algernon."

The gentleman smiled at her frank volubility, and then said,

"With whom did you live before you came to reside at Dr. Hampden's?"

Her voice changed, and her countenance fella s she answered,

"With poor grandmamma Cleveland;" and all the vivacity previously animating her features was suddenly obscured.

"Do you often," resumed the stranger, after a momentary pause, "walk to S——?"

"Once or twice a-week to bathe."

They had now reached the shore at which they were to land. Adela and Ruth skipped out of the boat without assistance, and then turned to watch the landing of the beautiful poney, and to obtain, if they could, a view of the lady's face; but she held her handkerchief up to it, and it was also shaded by her veil.

At the distance of about twenty paces from the bank, there was a large tree, newly felled, lying upon the ground; the lady walked towards it, saying to Adela, in a faltering voice as she passed,

"Will you sit down there a moment by me?"

The gentleman addressed some observations to Amy and Ruth, which detained them where they stood, and Adela alone followed her conductress.

When they were seated, the lady, taking her hand, and fervently pressing it, said,

"How much I wish to speak to you without the danger of being overheard!—Are you ever suffered to leave home unattended? Could you meet me here to-morrow, about this time, without any companion? Trust me, dearest child, no harm shall befall you. I would sooner die than injure you. Oh, if you knew what is passing in my heart—if you knew how your sight gratifies, pains, affects me!"—

She stopped, overpowered by her own emotion, and Adela felt the hand which had hitherto held hers, thrown around her waist, and the next moment was strained with passionate tenderness to the lady's heart.

Penetrated by such indications of fondness, the grateful child would have clasped her arms about the stranger's neck; but hastily rising, as if to repress her young companion's too-unguarded sensibility, she said,

"I fear to trust myself longer with you—at least, before witnesses; but shall *you*

fear, to-morrow, to grant me another interview?—Dearest child! my precious Adela! say, will you meet me here again?"

"I will—indeed I will," eagerly replied the little girl.

"And you will forbear communicating this request to any of your friends? You will be silent and punctual?"

"I will not say a word to any body; and I will be here at two o'clock—the moment I have done my lessons."

The lady spoke no more, but again pressed the child's hand, and made a sign to her to go back alone to the little group at the water-side; and the gentleman then, wishing them all good morning, led the poney forward, and rejoined his female companion.

Ruth and Amy were both most anxious to know what had been the subject of the lady's conference; and Adela, unused to falsehood or mystery, was painfully distressed how to answer their enquiries; at length she said,

"I don't think I have any right to tell you, for the lady begged I would not; so

I should be very glad if you would not ask me."

"They no good people," cried Amy, rather indignantly. "Why for they say to you secrets? Ah, dear little Missy, no make secrets! Tell kind friend at home all."

"Pray, Amy, don't ask me to do it; and pray don't say at home, that I *have* any secret. It will be very wrong if you force me to repeat what I have promised to conceal. Dear Amy, be good-natured, and say nothing about my conversation with this lady —pray, pray don't; and, my dear Ruth, be you silent also."

She pressed her request with such irresistible urgency, that they, at length, both gave her their word not to betray her.

But the speaking countenance of the ingenuous little creature denoted throughout the day, a degree of thoughtfulness, an internal disquietude, she had neither the art to conceal, nor the presence of mind to account for plausibly when questioned. Mrs. Hampden believed that some serious indisposition was impending over her, and was much alarmed. Algernon was persuaded

something had vexed her, but sought, in vain, to discover *what*. Amy was half frightened, and every moment felt more and more tempted to reveal all that had occurred at the ferry; whenever she alluded to the subject, however, Adela's imploring eyes so eloquently besought her to forbear, that she stopped, irresolute whether to increase the little girl's present uneasiness by speaking openly, or to trust for the restoration of her cheerfulness to the salutary effects of a night's sound sleep.

Morning came, and Adela, still more agitated than on the preceding day, yet found it necessary, by a vigorous effort, to assume composure, lest, as the hour of two drew near, her steps should be watched, or her departure from the house prohibited. Neither of these circumstances took place. When the lessons were over, she was suffered, with the other little girls, to go into the garden, receiving only a caution not to overheat herself. A few minutes afterwards, the sound of the distant clock of S——, striking two, faintly reached her ear. She coloured violently, and her heart

beat to such an excess, that she was almost frightened at her own agitation. The children had gathered round a little rabbit-hutch, to visit and feed two milk-white favourites, which they were permitted to keep in a corner of the garden. Adela thought the moment favourable for escaping unseen. She softly opened the gate, near which she stood: it led, by a path between two hedges, to a sloping meadow, which several tall trees, and the inequality of the intervening ground, concealed from the house. She traversed it unimpeded, and quick as lightning: one other field only divided her from the appointed spot. This she likewise flew across without opposition; and arriving, breathless and panting, at the stile which separated it from the ferry-walk, was lifted over it by the gentleman she had seen the preceding day, who appeared to have been waiting her arrival.

"Where," cried the eager child ,almost exhausted by her own speed, "where is the lady who asked me to come?"

"You will see her in two minutes, she is

expecting you with impatience. But you are tired—you are hurried—let me carry you to her."

"No, no, I can walk; pray set me down; and tell me—why did she desire me to come? Who is she? Why did she wish to see me so privately?"

"She will tell you all these things herself. Be composed—walk gently, and try to recover breath."

"Oh, I am so anxious to get back again! If they miss me, you don't know how uneasy it will make them! Pray let us go quick: poor Amy will be frightened to death!"

The gentleman, to appease her, hastened his steps, and conducting her for some time along the banks of the stream, at length brought her to the entrance of a shady lane, where, with the horses' heads turned from her, Adela beheld a chariot standing motionless, and a footman waiting beside it.

Amy's words, "They no good people!" rushed into her mind; she turned pale as death, and shrinking back—

"Oh, what are you going to do with

me?" she cried, in an agony. "For mercy's sake don't take me away! let me go back! Pray, pray let me go back!" And with her little hands clasped, and her eyes raised in tearful supplication, she almost knelt to him for permission to depart.

"My dear," cried the stranger, concerned at her distress, "you have nothing to fear; we would not put any violence upon you for the world. Proceed with all confidence; the lady who desired to see you, is waiting in that carriage: it shall not move whilst you are in it without your consent; but surely you will not refuse to enter it a few minutes, that she may speak to you without interruption?"

Re-assured by his gentleness, and half ashamed of her suspicions, Adela again suffered him to take her hand, and quietly to lead her forward. They soon reached the chariot: the footman held the door open; the steps were already let down; and Adela, raised into it by the stranger, who instantly followed, found herself clasped in the arms of the unknown lady, and deluged with the tears that were shed over her without control. Susceptible and tender-

hearted, the little girl wept also, though she knew not for what cause; and during an interval of some continuance, the lady's deep sobs, and her own sympathising sighs, were the only sounds that could be distinguished.

"My dearest child," at length said the gentleman, withdrawing her from his companion's arms, and most affectionately embracing her likewise; "you asked me who this lady was. She is my wife; and she is well acquainted with—your mother!"

"My mother? Have I a mother living? Where is she?"

"At this precise moment she is in England: but, in a very short time, her affairs will call her back into Scotland, where she habitually resides. She loves you very tenderly, my dear little Adela, though she has never had the happiness of living with you. She is anxious to hear all you can communicate relative to yourself, and your brother; and this lady and I have sought an interview with you, for the express purpose of obtaining intelligence for her. Your father, you say, and Julius, are in London;—why are not you with them?"

"I never was told."

"Do you suspect it is because your father is regardless of your society? Speak candidly;—is he less attached to you than to Julius?"

Adela hung her head, and the tears rolled down her cheeks; but she made no answer. Again the lady bitterly wept, and with more fondness than ever, embraced her.

"Adela," resumed the stranger, "I understand your silence. Hints of Mr. Cleveland's negligence respecting you have often reached us; and little is the chance, as you advance in life, that his regard will increase. He detains you, as you perceive, at a distance from himself and his other children; he refuses to allow you opportunity of seeking to conciliate his affection; he rears you as an alien, and never will you experience the happiness of a cordial welcome beneath his roof. From your infancy, my dear Adela, has he thus coldly slighted you; and through life, I greatly fear, you will find him equally insensible. You sigh—you think me cruel for setting before you such a prospect! Hear me, my poor girl. You have

a mother living, to whom you are dearer than the air she breathes; that mother pines to take you to her heart; to love, to protect, to be devoted to you. Circumstances, of no importance to you to know, have parted her from your father; yet she possesses affluence, and power to benefit you to the utmost extent of your wishes. She resides with a friend who would receive you with open arms; who would treat you as a tender parent. No rival in their affection should rob you of any part of their regard: you should reign without competitor over their hearts, their fortune, their time, and even their thoughts; and your compliance, Adela—you know not how joyful your compliance would make them!"

Wringing her hands with extreme agitation, not wholly unmixed with honest resentment, Adela now exclaimed—

"Oh, why, why do you thus tempt me to do what I am sure cannot be right? If my mother loved me as you say, would she not have brought me up? Should I not have lived with her? Should I not have known her? Grandmamma *did* love me,

and till she died, I never left her. It was grandmamma who asked Dr. Hampden to take me; she told me so herself: she told me to obey him; to make myself contented and happy in his house; to be grateful to all his family, and never to leave them, unless my father sent for me. Grandmamma never talked to me of my mother; and indeed, indeed, sir," added the child, with energy, "I can hardly believe that I have one!"

"Oh, Heaven! she speaks daggers!" exclaimed the lady, throwing herself back in the carriage, and hiding her face with her hands.

"You are unjust and cruel to your unhappy mother," resumed the gentleman in an accent of reproach. "She *would* have brought you up; she *would* have fostered you with the tenderest care; but you were torn from her with inhuman sternness, and committed to a stranger to be nursed and sheltered; she was forbidden to mention you—to visit you—to admit you within your father's gates. These harsh and unnatural commands destroyed whatever affection she might once have felt for Mr. Cleve-

land, and—she left him! But, Adela, she left him for *your* sake, and has never ceased to sigh for your presence, to lament her involuntary estrangement, nor to flatter herself that the day would still arrive, when she might press to her heart a daughter willing to love her, and to be beloved."

Adela wept extremely as the stranger proceeded; she took his hand, when he paused, with the most touching sensibility, and said—

"Where is my mother? Oh, do not, do not tell me she is very far distant; for I cannot forsake my present home, nor yet can I bear, now, to live without seeing her!"

The lady, in great emotion at these words, clasped her hands together with fervour, and raised them to heaven as if in an ecstasy of mental thankfulness.

"Dear Adela! sweet little girl!" cried the delighted stranger, "what happiness this declaration will communicate to your poor mother! But, my love, she can only embrace you as a parent, when she is at liberty to detain you as her child; she cannot admit you as a transient visitor, she

cannot suffer you to know two homes; you must be wholly and irrevocably hers; you must accompany her to whatever part of the kingdom she repairs; you must give up all other dependance, and renounce all other intercourse!"

Pale and trembling, Adela, in a tone of the deepest despondency, demanded why such painful sacrifices were exacted?

"Your father, my dear," resumed the gentleman, "though he loves you not himself, will never voluntarily accord to your mother the blessing of your society. To the mercenary protection of strangers, he would—nay, we see he *does* yield you up without the slightest reluctance; but to her whom nature appointed for your guardian, so inveterate is his resentment, that no power on earth would induce him to resign you! If, therefore, you really are influenced by the affectionate feelings of a daughter; if you can really desire to be to your mother a prop, a consolation, the charm of her existence, you must attend her to a remote abode, and submit to every precaution which may conceal your place of residence from your father, and—for a

time—from all the rest of the world!—Have you the courage, Adela, to embark in such an enterprize? Weigh well your answer; reflect *who* it is you are about to renounce and grieve, or to gratify and bless!"

Adela gasped for breath;—a cold tremour shook her whole frame; she was awed by the solemnity of this injunction; she acknowledged her mother's right to her duty and her love:—yet, to tear herself from every other tie, to forsake the dear home she now inhabited; to give up for ever, Mrs. Hampden, her children, Algernon Mordington,—perhaps, too, her loved Amy! It was more than she had fortitude to bear, even in imagination;—and wildly exclaiming—"Oh, that I could but tell what I ought to do—what I *can* do!" she burst into a passion of tears, and sobbed with a convulsive violence, that gave the most serious alarm to her two companions. They touched the spring of one of the green blinds, and let down a side glass to give her air. At that moment, an anxious and agitated voice was heard at the door of the carriage, saying—

"Adela!—Adela! Are you there? Speak to me, if you are!—Pray, pray speak!"

"Oh, 'tis Algernon! dear Algernon!" cried she; and, resisting all opposition, she eagerly sprung to the window, adding—"I *am* here!—How did you find me?—Who sent you?—Oh, I am *so* happy to see you?"

"The whole house," answered he, "is in search of you! Dr. Hampden is himself amongst the pursuers. Dear Adela, pray come home! How *could* you put us into such a fright? What *could* induce you to enter this carriage?"

"She is in this carriage, young gentleman," cried the stranger, gravely and coldly addressing Mordington, "with persons well acquainted with some of the members of her family; she is in perfectly safe hands, be assured."

"I cannot doubt that," replied the undaunted boy, "when I see her in the protection of Sir Frederic and Lady Rosalvan: but her friends at home are under great anxiety."

"Have you been questioning our servant, sir?" hastily interrupted the gentle-

man. "By what means do you know us?"

"I have seen your carriage, sir, at S——, and there, also, I heard your name. But will you, now, permit Miss Cleveland's return to Dr. Hampden's? They are all in the utmost consternation and terror."

Sir Frederic, evidently extremely disconcerted, said a few words in a low voice to his lady, who, only in sighs and plaintive murmurs, answered him: and then, making an effort to speak calmly, he ordered the footman to open the door; gently disengaged Adela from the arms of his wife, which had again encircled her; kissed her himself with great kindness, and told her she was at liberty to depart. Adela lingered, and regarded them both, as if unwilling to forsake them: Mordington, however, impatiently seizing her hand, drew her from the carriage; bowed to Sir Frederic; and glowing with joy at his success, hastened with her to quit the lane, and never spoke, or abated his speed, till they had passed the stile leading from the ferry to the meadow where Sir Frederic had met her.

Then, slackening his pace, he said, as they proceeded, arm in arm, towards the house,—

"My dear, imprudent little Adela, how came you to put yourself into those people's hands? What was their design? To what motive did they attribute their secret and suspicious proceedings? Were they tampering with you to decoy you away? And would you—dear Adela—would you have gone with them?"

"I yesterday thought myself bound," replied she, "to answer no enquiries. It made me very unhappy, Algernon, to forbear telling you every thing, when you so kindly asked me why I was so silent and so grave: but I had promised not to speak; and I am sure, as that was the case, you would have thought very ill of me if I *had* spoken. To-day, I know no reason why I should not explain to you all that has passed."

She then gave him an unreserved detail of the whole affair; and when she paused—

"What a trial, and what an escape you

have had," cried he, breathless, almost, from the earnestness of attention with which he had listened to her! "My dear Adela, be assured that, at no moment of your life, you ever were in greater danger! Had I but delayed my arrival at the carriage door five minutes later, you probably would have given your reluctant consent to their villainous project — the horses would have moved forward — and we should completely have lost all traces of you! How I hate and despise their abominably secret and artful proceedings! Why not, in their own name, boldly apply to Dr. Hampden for permission to take you on a short visit to your mother? Why seek to entrap you away from all your friends? To set you wickedly against your father — against the parent who provides for you, and has alone acknowledged you? If your mother is so earnest to see you, why has she waited above eight years to declare it? At all events, why employ people to steal you away, at the risk of exposing Dr. Hampden to the blame of having neglected his charge? — Indeed, indeed, Adela, this Sir

Frederic is so ill-disposed a man, and has made me so indignant, that I am heartily sorry I have it not in my power to punish him as he deserves!"

Though unwilling to confess it, Adela experienced a considerable degree of uneasiness in hearing Sir Frederic spoken of with such severity. She remembered the kindness of his expressions, and the benignity of his countenance; she still, in fancy, felt herself strained to the lady's bosom, and bathed with her tears; and all these recollections gave to them both an interest in her imagination which rendered it painful to her to listen to their condemnation.

"When," cried she, seeking to divert Algernon's thoughts to other subjects, "when did you hear of my absence, and what lucky guess sent you to look for me near the Ferry?"

He reminded her, that on the preceding day, when her visible perturbation had so much struck him, he had enquired of Amy how she had passed the morning, and whom she had seen. The nurse told him, she had

been at S—— to bathe, and, on her way home, had encountered two strangers, whose figure she described, though, restricted by her promise to her young mistress, she had forborne to speak of the lady's mysterious conversation with her. Mordington had several times, upon the beach at S——, seen two persons exactly answering to the description of these strangers. He had, by accident, heard several people,—tradesmen in the town,—wondering at their resorting to the sea-side so early in the season; and one observer, more critical than the rest, had remarked, that it was very odd they should drive about in a carriage without arms, and, on their first arrival call themselves *Mr.* and *Mrs.* Rosalvan, though, from the direction on the letters left for them at the post-office, it was discovered the gentleman was a baronet!

"I'd lay any wager," added the sagacious shopkeeper, commenting upon this circumstance, "they are here after some sly trick, though it be past my finding out of what nature. People neither take up false titles, nor drop their real ones, without some politic reason. Besides, they look

deuced deep, and keep so aloof from every body, and seem so full of thought and caution, and are so solemn and sparing of their words, that, my life for it, we shall soon hear of some queer prank they either *have* played, or *mean* to play!"

"The charitable conclusions of this facetious personage," continued Algernon, "at the time I heard them, only made me laugh: but when I saw you look so unlike yourself, and was told by Amy that you had met this Sir Frederic and his lady, I began to wonder whether any thing they had said to you, was the cause of your disturbance. To day, our schoolmaster being sent for suddenly to visit a sick relation, dismissed us all two or three hours earlier than usual. The first intelligence we heard on arriving at home, was, that you were missing. The hue-and-cry and the alarm was general. I remembered the ideas which had haunted me about Sir Frederic, and I also remembered, that he was said, with Lady Rosalvan, to saunter almost daily in the direction of the Ferry-walk. Fear, and suspicion of I knew not what, gave me wings. I flew, rather than ran, till I

reached the water-side: you were not there: but I perceived, a few paces from the stile, a ribbon lying on the ground, which, it struck me, I had seen you wear in your hat. I was then convinced that you had been there; and continued my search, till you know how we met."

They were, now, arrived within sight of the garden-gate through which Adela had so adventurously effected her escape. Amy, in greater tribulation than it is in the power of words to describe, was the first to espy them. Frantic with joy, a scream burst from her that was heard all over the premises, and rushing impetuously forward, she seized Adela in her affectionate arms; kissed her with rapturous fondness;—wept, laughed, and sobbed by turns;—and then, as if suddenly recollecting herself, she poured upon the little girl such a torrent of reproaches; so vehemently, and even angrily scolded her for the fright she had occasioned them, that Mordington, who saw Adela's eyes fill with tears, and knew how easily, after so much agitation, her spirits might be overpowered, interfered in

her behalf, and besought Amy to let them proceed quietly to the house.

The outcries of the nurse had, however, by this time, brought the whole family into the garden, and the re-appearance of the little truant was hailed with the most joyful acclamations. Algernon kindly undertook, when they were all somewhat tranquillized, to answer, in general terms, the multitude of questions which poor Adela's transient flight called forth. But, to Dr. and Mrs. Hampden, as soon as he had an opportunity of speaking to them in private, he gave a circumstantial account of every thing he knew.

The thanks and warmest approbation of the good couple for the active part he had performed, followed this recital. They perfectly agreed with him, that Sir Frederic Rosalvan, whatever might be his motives, had formed a deliberate design to carry off the too-confiding Adela. Dr. Hampden, though generally amongst the first to be informed of the arrival of strangers at S——, had never heard this gentleman's name; he knew not how long he had

been in their vicinity, nor on what pretence he came: but these were enquiries he promised his wife immediately to set on foot; and meanwhile it was determined, that the child should, henceforward, be strictly guarded, and on no consideration whatever, allowed to go alone beyond the precincts of the garden.

CHAP. VIII.

ELUCIDATION.

WHILST, with countenances and minds restored to composure after the alarm of the morning, the family of Dr. Hampden, variously occupied, sat in the evening round the great parlour table, Amy, suddenly opening the door, called out,

"Little Missy! little Missy! come, see what is here! It no quite dark; — come, come, see!"

Adela, and the other children with her, started up at the summons, and, guided by Amy, ran to the front gate; where, bright, and sleek, and graceful, and docile, they beheld the beautiful poney of the Ferry-boat. A lad, one of the helpers in Sir Frederic's stable, held the bridle; and, on being interrogated by half a dozen voices at once, said,

"I have a letter in my pocket, which I

am to stay whilst the doctor reads ; and I have orders to leave the poney here for one Miss Cleveland."

"For me ?" cried Adela. "Is it possible ? How kind, how very kind they are !"

The children, untainted with envy, congratulated her on an acquisition so delightful ; and gathering round, and admiring and caressing the passive animal, thought not of the letter, till Amy called them in to hear it read.

But to read it publicly, after casting his eyes over its contents, was the last thing Dr. Hampden meditated : he simply told Adela, that the pretty horse was indeed meant as a present for her ; that Sir Frederic and Lady Rosalvan proposed leaving S—— the next morning ; and that he was now going to write to them a short note, in which he should insert her respects and grateful thanks.

"Oh, let me write to them myself," cried she. "Let me ask them where they are going, and whether I shall ever hear from them or see them again. You don't know how much I could have loved them, had I known them longer !"

Dr. Hampden looked at her with moistened eyes, and said,

"My good little girl, you *shall* write to them, and I am glad that your own grateful heart suggested the idea."

This permission enchanted her; she was furnished with a sheet of paper detached from that on which the doctor meant to write; Algernon ruled some lines for her; and in unformed characters, but with simple sincerity, she composed her little epistle (the first she had ever penned), and proudly saw it inclosed within her guardian's, to be dispatched by the messenger who had brought the poney.

The letter from Sir Frederic, which had been so scrupulously withheld from public inspection, was written in these terms:

"Sir,

"You have probably, ere this, obtained information from your youthful inmate, Miss Cleveland, of the tendency of the conference I held with her this morning, and may conceive yourself, as her guardian, entitled to resent so clandestine an attempt to allure her from your protection: but in all

that I meditated, I as much consulted what was due to your character, as what I judged would be most conducive to the accomplishment of my own purpose. Of the truth of this assertion, you will be most incontrovertibly assured, when you learn the nature of the motives by which I was influenced.

" In consequence of the discovery made by young Mordington of my name, and of the full conviction you must entertain of my designs, the hopes of quiet success which I had allowed myself to entertain, are completely overthrown. I therefore quit this place to-morrow, deeply concerned at my failure, yet willing to give you, before I depart, the satisfaction of being able to account for the mystery of my conduct.

" The lady who is now my wife, and who accompanied me on both occasions when I had the pleasure of seeing Adela Cleveland, was once named Cleveland herself; to be explicit, she is Adela's mother. Our residence, for some years, has been in one of the western counties of Scotland,

where the profound retirement to which it was at once an act of choice and of wisdom to devote ourselves, excluded not, however, from the memory of Lady Rosalvan, the children of her first unhappy marriage. The probable fate of the little girl, in particular, she reflected upon with the acutest anxiety. She had too much reason to fear that the helpless innocent would never be considered by its father but as an object of stern and implacable antipathy. Her heart nourished these terrors till they became so insupportable, that, slighting inferior evils —the risk of reproach and insult, she formed the desperate resolution of applying to Mr. Cleveland, through the intervention of a friend, for the surrender of his daughter to her guardianship. The request was refused with contumely and bitterness: it probably merely tended to confirm his groundless suspicions of the paternal interest in the child which he has ever been too prone to ascribe to me; and resentment against Lady Rosalvan conspired with still fiercer animosity against myself, to determine him on withholding a boon, whose

only value in his eyes was the power its detention gave him of opposing our wishes, and disappointing our hopes.

"How hard, how almost impracticable I found it, whilst Adela was confided to the mercy of a hired nurse, to reconcile my wife to the necessity of living without her, I should in vain attempt to describe. Since the birth of that child, she has never been a parent; and ceaseless has been her regret and anguish at a separation which has seemed to rob existence of every charm, and equally to deprive her of the wish and of the power to find alleviation in any other attachment.

"We had both erred, Dr. Hampden; I dispute not, therefore, the justice which sentenced us to meet the punishment of our frailty in its unavoidable consequences. Lady Rosalvan, rendered miserable by the renunciation of her child to which she was condemned, rendered *me* miserable by the sight of her unappeasable sorrow. Our mutual attachment, though not extinguished, lay dormant: we lived without confidence, yet we lived in seclusion; nothing gave her joy; she participated in

none of my feelings; but fearing to speak her grief, though unable to disguise it, she taught me to be fearful of remonstrating, lest remonstrance should be interpreted into reproach. What an existence, in the prime of life, for two beings detached from all other society, yet each insufficient to constitute the happiness of the other!

"A few years, a very few years, spent in the endurance of such hopeless constraint and wretchedness, have anticipated, upon the constitution and energy of both, the effects of time, and brought upon us all the languor and depression of premature old age. Had I children, Dr. Hampden; in exhorting them to withstand the influence of their passions, I would set before them the sad experience of my own life, and leave it to themselves to point the moral. Yet who amongst us ever benefited by the experience of another?

"But it was some consolation to us at length to hear that the venerable Mrs. Cleveland had claimed the privilege of befriending the little outcast, and of rearing her under her own eye. My wife now resigned herself to the deprivation with more

fortitude, and a ray of something resembling cheerfulness enlivened our solitary abode.

"The death of Adela's protectress, however, too speedily renewed all Lady Rosalvan's inquietude, and redoubled all her distress. She was really ill through excess of perturbation; and the suspense in which we were long held as to Mr. Cleveland's plans for the child's future destination, aggravated her sufferings. We learnt, in process of time, that the poor babe was committed to *your* care: but of your character, your probable conduct towards her, your family, and habits of life, we remained wholly ignorant. It was now mid-winter, and my hapless partner was in the drooping state of a confirmed invalid. Yet she implored me incessantly to take her to England; to conduct her to the spot inhabited by her child; to enable her, from personal observation, to ascertain that she met with conscientious and indulgent treatment.

"To deny, unconditionally, such urgent supplications, was not in my nature. I soothed her with solemn assurances of compliance with her wishes the moment he-

own health, and the return of spring, should render the journey practicable. She struggled against debility to preserve, or rather, to attain the power, of profiting by my acquiescence in her plan. The winter slowly and heavily wore away; and about a fortnight since, we arrived at this place.

"Uncertain whether you might not have received injunctions from Mr. Cleveland to deny Adela to her mother's sight, we dared venture no open application to you for permission to behold her. From some of the people at S——, we learnt that your own children, and frequently a little ward who resided with you, resorted, for the purpose of bathing, to the sea-side every third or fourth day. My wife was too weak for long pedestrian excursions, and a carriage was no vehicle in which to linger about your vicinity unremarked. I purchased for her a safe and easy-paced poney, and we spent many hours of every fair day in unsuccessful endeavours to encounter the object of our pursuit. I already meditated the design I was so near putting into execution, of engaging her to consent, could we meet with her in private, to accompany us

into Scotland. The effort was well worth hazarding; and seemed almost *due* (allow the expression) to the dejected spirit of my long-afflicted wife. It could be injurious to no one, if, by conducting it with circumspection, we enabled you truly to assert, that you neither knew the name nor destination of its perpetrators. The former of these, indeed, I flattered myself you might never have heard; at least, never have heard with any information, that it belonged to the husband of Adela's mother: yet, to avoid as much as possible, all danger from that circumstance, we dropped our title, and as scrupulously shunned every chance of encountering your observation, as we diligently sought opportunities of beholding your little charge.

"You probably know the rest. Young Mordington proved to us, that with all our caution, we had failed in escaping detection. Aware of Mr. Cleveland's invincible reluctance to yield up to us his authority over the child; and satisfied that if informed she was in our hands, he would rather tear her from us by force of law, than gratify the mother's anxiety to detain her, — we

have abandoned the undertaking, and are, as I have told you, about to depart.

"Lady Rosalvan, as you will easily believe, is deeply grieved thus again, and for so indefinite a period, to be forced to lose sight of her daughter: but it will be a consolation to her to recollect the child's spontaneous assurances to us of her present happiness. Her bright and smiling aspect confirms the assertion. Accept, sir, and deign to present to your excellent partner, the fervent thanks of a grateful mother for the kindness you have united to shew to the child she is herself forbidden to cherish! —Would you add to that mother's obligations one other inestimable proof of benevolence, let it be this: encourage Adela to address to Lady Rosalvan (not, perhaps, as her parent, but as her parent's friend) an occasional letter. I insert our direction; well assured, that if you take into consideration the unspeakable gratification your compliance will afford my poor wife, it will not be in your power to deny her request.

"We entreat you to permit your little ward to make her first essay as a rider on the horse which has so often, and so safely,

carried her mother: and if you would also allow your own children sometimes to mount it, our satisfaction would be increased.

"I have the honour to be, with every good wish, and every grateful sentiment,

"Sir, your obliged and

"obedient humble servant,

"FREDERIC ROSALVAN."

Dr. Hampden discerned in this letter so many indications of a feeling heart; an openness of character so unperverted and so manly; and a regret for past errors so earnest and so true, that, warmly interested in favour of its hitherto unknown writer, he suffered his pen, in answering it, to be guided by the genuine kindness of his nature; and dispatched a few lines, compounded of such cordiality and respect, as failed not equally to impart to Sir Frederic and his apprehensive lady, the most re-assuring and consolatory sensations.

Meanwhile, Adela, happy in her new acquisition, and happy to participate in its advantages with her youthful companions, soon learnt to become the most fearless and expert rider in the family. She often bitterly regretted, that Algernon possessed not a

courser of equal beauty and perfection on which to have cantered by her side; and, perhaps, of all the indulgences that could have been accorded him, none, in his estimation, would have been of higher value: but indulgences did not seem to be precisely what his noble uncle was inclined to bestow upon him; and Adela had been a whole twelvemonth at Dr. Hampden's, ere the slightest change was made in the promising boy's frugal mode of education. His little friend's advantages, on the contrary, appeared to be hourly increasing. Sir Frederic Rosalvan, now, in regular correspondence with Dr. Hampden, sketched out a plan for the cultivation of her mind, which he besought her guardian to see strictly executed. Masters of various descriptions, the best which, at so great a distance from the metropolis, could be obtained, were engaged, with scarcely any regard to the expense their attendance occasioned.

"I am rich," the secluded Baronet wrote, "and my temptations to dissipate money are now circumscribed within the narrowest limits. Adela, it can never be doubted, had she not been deprived of the

advantages of the station in which she was born, by the events which immediately succeeded her early exclusion from the paternal roof, would have received as liberal an education as her father is now bestowing upon the two daughters of his first marriage. *I* am the cause of the obscurity to which she is condemned, and of every privation she is doomed to suffer. It is therefore, on my part, no more than an act of justice to attempt making her some compensation for the means of improvement she has lost. At this moment she feels not, she thinks not of the hardship of her destiny; but should the time ever come when Mr. Cleveland shall call her to hold her proper rank in society, how deeply mortifying to her would it be, to find herself defective in any of the accomplishments, personal or intellectual, which education might have bestowed! Lady Rosalvan, on this subject, is yet more anxious than myself. Her daughter's only chance, she avers, of recommending herself to Mr. Cleveland's favour, will be through the influence of brilliant talents, and superior grace and beauty: he is the slave of these exterior endowments;

and, let her possess what merit she may, unaided by such attractions, he will ever hold her in as slight estimation, as he does at this moment."

In consequence of representations so forcible, Dr. Hampden felt himself bound to conform with scrupulous exactness to Sir Frederic's liberal instructions. His wife, though it was not without disgust she witnessed the prodigality with which so much money was lavished upon superfluous instructors, observed a determined neutrality and silence; only blessing Heaven, that *her* daughters were not condemned to the drudgery of toiling for such vain and frivolous attainments.

CHAP. IX.

ADOPTION.

THUS affairs proceeded in the tranquil abode of the benevolent physician, and Mordington was suffered to enter his fourteenth year without experiencing the slightest change in his situation. The youth himself felt little disturbance at this neglect; yet, when discussing with William and Reuben Hampden, the professions to which they were to be brought up, he had sometimes been heard to say—

"Your father tells me, I am intended for the army: but I rather think he mistakes the matter, and that I am destined to the honour of becoming principal usher to our good old schoolmaster! I am sure, if they keep me much longer poring over Latin and Greek under his tuition, I shall be much better qualified for that office, than for beating—*according to rule,* at least—the enemies of my country, be they ever

such raw and untrained recruits. All I shall understand, will be how to beat little stupid boys, too lazy to learn their Accidence without a daily flogging: and I give you my word," added he, "if that should ever become my trade, I will, for the benefit of learning, and for old acquaintance-sake, flog your youngest brothers, and your sons' sons, gratis, to the third and fourth generation!"

"Thank you for the friendly promise," cried William; "and, in return, I, who am to be an illustrious knight of the pestle and mortar, engage to furnish you, and all your progeny, with the choicest drugs in my shop, upon the same terms."

"Fairly offered," resumed Mordington—"Now, then, Reuben, tell us what *you* will do for us and our future generation? William and I, you find, have entered into a compact to take care of the minds and bodies of our respective descendants: you must have the charge of their souls; there is nothing else left for you. So, determine upon becoming a parson, and we will admit you a member of our confederacy."—

"Do, my dear Reuben," cried little Ju-

dith, his second sister, "and let me live with you, and keep your house. I should like better than any thing in the world, to have the management of a nice snug parsonage."

"And let me, Algernon," cried Adela, archly, "have the charge of all the little dunces you may flog too hard! I will nurse them, and comfort them, till they get well, and become fit for a fresh trimming!—Poor souls! I dare say they will often want my care!"

"You shall have the sole superintendency of them," answered Mordington, laughing;—"from this moment I dub you directress and overseer of the ward for flagellated dolts!"

"I wish," said Dr. Hampden, who, a little before, had entered the room, "it may not prove the ward for incurables!"

"Why, my dear sir," cried Adela, in a tone of remonstrance, "do you imagine Algernon will be wicked enough to scourge them so unmercifully, that they will never recover?"

"He will hardly, I should think, my dear Adela, proceed to such desperate ex-

tremities; but the infirmity of *dolt-headism* is in itself malady sufficient, and seldom admits a cure!"

A very few weeks after this conversation, a total and most extraordinary revolution in Algernon's affairs unexpectedly occurred. Of the two sons on whom Lord Ossely relied for the support and preservation of his family greatness, one was suddenly carried off by a raging fever, caught at school; and the other, always of a sickly habit, was left by the same disease, in so deplorable a state of bodily infirmity and mental weakness, that there seemed scarcely a probability he could be reared to manhood; or, being reared, that he should ever possess the full use of his reasoning faculties. The blow was severe, no doubt; yet it fell upon one whom Dr. Hampden, with all his philanthropy, could with difficulty prevail upon himself to commiserate as he ought. Lord Ossely's utter personal neglect of his unoffending nephew; the manifest disposition he had betrayed to complete his education upon the most contracted system, and the suspected design of condemning him, hereafter, to penurious obscurity, were offences

to the doctor's sense of justice, which no compelled acts of tardy retribution could induce him to pardon. It was soon discovered, however, that on the entire loss of one son, and the apprehended incapacity of the other, Algernon's uncle felt disposed to centre in him all his ambitious views, and all his proud hopes of perpetuating the honours of his line. In addition to the distinctions already securely in his possession, he looked forward, in a very few years, to the attainment of an earldom, which, on the death, without male posterity, of a distant relation, would devolve to him and his successors. To enjoy this long-coveted accession in rank merely during his own life, and then, through failure of heirs male, to know that it must pass into another family, or rest amongst the dormant peerages, was such misery to Lord Ossely, as none but men of his character can pity or imagine. Whilst Algernon survived, the dreaded catastrophe was not to be feared; and from the moment the remembrance of that youth, vigorous in constitution, and bright in intellects, occurred to the Viscount, connected with the idea, that to him these dignities

would descend, the sorrows of his paternal heart were mitigated; the feebleness, personal and mental, of his surviving son was reflected upon with diminished agony; and the nephew, never seen for eight years, nor thought of, till now, for eight successive minutes, became the dearest object of his generous solicitude!

It can scarcely be necessary to state with what mingled joy at his brightening prospects, and grief at his consequent recall, the family at Dr. Hampden's learnt these rapid and unforeseen changes in the affairs of their fondly-loved, and long-established inmate. The directions from his uncle for his immediate removal, were almost indecently precipitate; every idea of devoting him to a military career was abandoned; he was directly placed at Eton School; furnished with ample supplies of pocket-money; received, during his vacations, with open arms at his uncle's town-residence, or at Mordington Castle; and, in short, thrown into as fair a way of being corrupted by sudden prosperity, as ever animated and inexperienced youth was placed in. But Algernon, exclusive of the inte-

grity and goodness of his heart, was preserved from serious injury by a variety of subordinate causes. He had discernment sufficient to perceive, and, in secret, to laugh at, the origin of all this wondrous indulgence and profusion. He soon saw, and even felt, that he was valued, not for himself, but for reasons of family policy. Throughout the household of his noble protector, not a single individual warmly interested him, except his own youthful sister Eudocia, a lovely little girl, of the same age with Adela; and the eldest of his female cousins, Isabella Mordington, two years her senior. The Viscountess, he considered as a good and truly respectable woman, but nothing in her manners conciliated his attachment or recompensed him for the loss of the warm-hearted Mrs. Hampden; and whichever way he turned, no substitutes presented themselves to fill up the void left in his bosom by the deprivation of his early companions, William and Reuben. In his letters to these faithfully remembered friends, he depicted the state of his mind, and the regrets that often possessed it, in the most earnest and forcible

terms. To Adela, also, he frequently wrote; and knowing her, though so young, capable of entering into all the spirit of an unreserved correspondence, he scrupled not, on the arrival, as a fellow student, of her brother Julius at Eton, freely to communicate to her his thoughts of him.

"We agree," said he, "like fire and water. I can perfectly account for my own unhesitating disposition, the moment we met, to find fault with every thing he said, did, or even looked: but as he can never, till now, have heard any thing about me, I am surprised at the admirable instinct which so immediately led him to make choice of me for his ruling object of antipathy. I am sorry to say it, dear Adela, but he certainly is, by many degrees, the most presuming, consequential and incorrigible little varlet in the whole school. It would do him, and me too, a vast deal of good, could I, once for all, without disgrace, give him a handsome drubbing; but the advantage I possess over him in size and strength forbids the exploit. What perpetually provokes me to cuff him is, that with all his strutting, and all his self-

sufficiency, he is as like you (who never strutted at any thing in your life but an angry bantam-hen) as he can stare! Some of these days you will hear him cried up as the handsomest young man in London; already he is as much of a coxcomb as many a fine fellow three times his age. By some queer chance, however, he is an exceedingly promising scholar; and the boys who associate with him, and can support his arrogance, say that he is fearless and generous; but I wish, upon the whole, he was less like you in outward show, or resembled you more in inward disposition. Your father came down with him the first day he made his appearance here, and I happened to be in the way of having an excellent view of him. I was eager to seize the opportunity of beholding one with whom you are so nearly connected; and following close at his heels whilst he was walking about the town, I saw him go up to a carriage which was waiting at a pastry-cook's door, and speak to two young ladies who were within it, under the care of a person who seemed to be their governess. These, I have since learnt, were

your two half-sisters; — for your further satisfaction, let me inform you, that besides being remarkably pretty, they both appeared to be extremely good-humoured; and seem to be exactly the sort of girls you would like, whether they were your sisters, or entire strangers.

"I have wished, ever since I became acquainted with her myself, that you could strike up an intimacy with Eudocia, *my* little sister. In addition to being a great deal handsomer than any thing I have seen in this part of the world, she is the best tempered and most affectionate creature you can imagine. Lord and Lady Ossely have been very kind to her; and she has been taken as much care of as their own daughters. At present she is a good deal more lively and clever than either of them; and I do believe she will grow up a charming woman. I have talked to her so often about you, that she longs to know you, and to be introduced to dear good Amy; to Ruth, and Judith, and Frisk; and even to the poney. Adieu, my dear Adela."

Though circumstances had conspired to withdraw Mordington so entirely from Dr.

Hampden's roof and protection, nothing produced any alteration in the situation of Adela till nearly four years after his departure. She was then equally surprised and delighted by the arrival of a letter from her eldest sister, newly married, inviting her, in the most cordial terms, to spend some weeks with Mr. Somerville and herself, at their house in Northumberland. This was the first proof of attention, which, since the death of her grandmother, she had received from any of her family, and the gratitude with which it inspired her, was as joyful as it was sincere. A *visit* to Mrs. Somerville, implied not a permanent separation from her friends in Devonshire, and therefore doubled her satisfaction; since, however anxious she was to see and to love those with whom she was so closely allied, the prospect of being wholly removed from the house of Dr. Hampden, would, thus suddenly proposed, have been insupportable to her.

Attended by Amy in a travelling chaise, and by a trusty domestic of Mr. Somerville's, the happy girl, early in the month of July, began her gaily-anticipated jour-

ney; and, at the expected time, without accident or molestation, reached the place of her destination.

Nothing could exceed the kindness with which her sister, or the cheerfulness and hospitality with which Mr. Somerville hailed her arrival. In the former she beheld an elegant young woman, scarcely more than eighteen, of the most graceful and prepossessing manners, who, with an encouraging sweetness which Adela found irresistible, addressed her as the being she had most wished to know, and felt most disposed to regard with interest and affection. In Mr. Somerville appeared, at once, even to the undiscriminating eye of a girl of thirteen, a character of the most perfect and unpretending simplicity, accompanied by extremely good natural sense, but liable, from eagerness and occasional want of judgment, to errors and oversights seldom mischievous, but often embarrassing to those with whom he was connected. His age seemed to be about seven or eight and twenty; he was neither plain nor handsome, but had the air of a man accustomed to good company, great frankness and hilarity

of countenance, and a temper which nothing but the sight of meanness or injustice could ruffle.

With such an host and hostess, and in a delightful mansion, beautifully situated, where it seemed to be the study of the kind entertainers to vary her pleasures, and contribute to her gratification, Adela could not be otherwise than supremely happy. Her spirits were exhilarated to their highest pitch; time not only seemed to have wings, but, as she often remarked, to be always using them—always flying! "This," cried she, "is so like being in Fairy-land, or so like a pleasant dream, that I am in a perpetual fright lest it should all vanish in an instant; or lest I should suddenly awake, and find myself in bed at S——, with Amy standing beside me, urging me to get up and hasten down stairs to take a lesson of my old French master in the back parlour!"

About a fortnight after her arrival at Rosedown Court, the name of Mr Somerville's abode, the house was further enlivened by an accession of visitors nearly as youthful as herself, and all connected with her,

though all individually strangers. The chief personage in the set, at least, in his own estimation, was her brother, come to spend a portion of his summer holidays with Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, who judged that their proposing it would be gratifying to his father. With him arrived his cousin, the son of Mr. Cleveland's only brother; and, accompanied by her governess, came also the eldest sister of this youth, Miss Barbara Cleveland, a girl of fifteen, imperiously decreed by nature to be a dwarf, though tortured by art, into being of all dwarfs the most formal and unbending; her countenance was sharp-featured and supercilious; and in the composition of her mind was united the shallow judgment of a child, with the pert pretensions of a pedant. To an opinion the most exalted of her own merit, personal and mental, she added the coolest incredulity as to the merit of almost every other human being.

The astonishment of Julius at sight of Adela—the little creature whom he had for so many years accustomed himself to speak and to think of, as the *pale-faced*

whimperer, was not wholly unmixed with feelings of brotherly and cordial exultation.

"Why, how she is grown!" exclaimed he, shaking her heartily by the hand. "How different a looking girl she is to what I ever expected to see her!—Hang it! There will be no comfort in plaguing her now, for I make no doubt, she knows perfectly how to take her own part! In the name of wonder, Adela, where did you pick up such a good colour, and such a happy, contented face?"

"We must suppose," said Mrs. Somerville, smiling, "that whilst she was at the *physic-shop*, as you used to call the good Dr. Hampden's, *they lay in her way, and she found them*."*

"No quotations, my dear Ellen!" cried Julius, with quickness; "leave them to the classical Barbara.—But, Adela, tell me, what have you done with your two inseparables? Are Master Frisk and Mrs. Amy still in the land of the living? Are either of them here? or both?"

---

* Falstaff, in King Henry IV.

"Amy is here, but Frisk remained at Dr. Hampden's."

"Perhaps under a course of medicine. But, however, never mind; it is sufficient for me that Amy is on the spot.—My dear Bab," added he, turning to his prim cousin, "you who hate to be losing a moment's time at this important period of your life, and who are always in search of fresh means to improve either your person or your mind, you will be charmed with this same Amy. She is a linguist of the first class, from whom you may obtain such insight into Oriental, or perhaps Coptic learning, as very few individuals now in England are capable of giving you; and besides this, being a model of grace, and a pattern of all female elegance, she may bestow a finish upon your carriage, and communicate a dignity to your movements, which no dancing-master could equal!"

Miss Barbara Cleveland, who, in this palpable rhodomontade, easily descried a sneer, that weapon of provocation which she was, of all others, the best qualified to retort, was beginning, with a sarcastic air, a reply full of tartness; when, as they were

sauntering upon the lawn in front of the house, Amy, who had been walking to the neighbouring village, suddenly emerged from amidst a clump of tall and slender trees, which rendered her diminutive height and disproportioned *embonpoint* more remarkable, and directed her steps towards the servants' hall along an unfenced path, in full view of the whole party. At this sight, Julius clapping his hands with an extravagant shout, eagerly exclaimed,

"There she is, Barbara! there she is!—Stop her, stop her, Adela, and let us have the pleasure of presenting to our accomplished cousin, this incomparable instructress!"

But Adela, who, in addition to her brother's vociferous mirth, had caught the sound, though in a lower key, of a laugh from her young cousin, Talbot Cleveland, flew towards Amy with a purpose widely different from that on which Julius wished her to go; for, concerned, as well as indignant, that her faithful friend should incur the mortification of being made an object of derision, she threw her arms round her neck the instant she reached her, saying,

"Make haste into the house, dear Amy, and never mind the noisy outcry of that rude boy."

"Ah, good young Missy," cried Amy, looking delightedly in Adela's face, "Amy no care who laughs, who makes mock, so long as dear Missy love her, and no make mock!"

"I mock you, Amy? Oh, never, never! And if I was a man, I would sooner fight for you, than let you be affronted!"

"No, no; no fight nor no vex about it! Me no mind their jeers; me do no harm to nobody; me say no rude thing to nobody; me only black, and not pretty, and not tall—they laugh for that! Let them laugh, and me laugh too, and think them foolish people!"

They were now arrived at the door leading to the servants' offices, and Adela, enchanted by Amy's untaught philosophy, again kissed her, and then flew back, not without a hope of exciting in her brother some shame, to record an answer which did the worthy negro so much credit. Its effect, however, upon Julius, was slight and transient; but it filled their cousin Talbot

with a contrition which he ingenuously acknowledged.

On the second or third morning after the arrival of this youthful trio, Mrs. Somerville, ordering an open carriage to the door for herself and the two young ladies, and leaving to her husband the care of the boys on horseback, sallied forth, as soon as breakfast was over, to shew them some of the beauties of the country, and particularly to gratify them with the sight of one of the most ancient castles, still habitable, that has been recorded in British history. The beauty of the day was highly favourable to the scheme, and they all entered with spirit into the pleasures of the excursion, and were eagerly communicating to each other their observations and satisfaction, when Adela, espying at the end of a long and stately avenue, a sumptuous edifice, something in the Gothic style, turned to Mrs. Somerville, and rather surprised, said,

"Is not that the place to which you meant to take us? Your coachman is driving past it!"

"That is not a mansion to which we

can, at present, have access," answered Mrs. Somerville: "the family it belongs to is just arrived from town; and till I know whether they mean to be acquainted with us, I do not choose to solicit, as if I was merely an accidental traveller, a view of their house."

Adela was perfectly satisfied with this explanation; but Barbara Cleveland enquired whose residence it was, and what it was called.

"It belongs," replied Mrs. Somerville, "to Lord Ossely, and is called Mordington Castle."

"Mordington Castle!" repeated Adela, starting at a name so long familiarized to her by the dates of letters received from thence. "That is where Algernon's uncle lives — where Algernon, perhaps, is now himself! Oh, how I should like to see it!"

"Who is Algernon?" enquired Mr. Somerville, who was just then riding close to the side of the carriage.

"He is an old playfellow and companion of mine, who lived with me almost two years at Dr. Hampden's; and he is nephew to Lord Ossely, and his other name is Mor-

dington. We were the best friends in the world, and I had almost rather see him than any body I know."

"Shall we," said the indulgent Mr. Somerville, looking at his wife, "shall we endeavour to gratify her, and send a servant up to the house to ask if we may see it?"

"I think," replied that lady good-humouredly, "we can never have a better excuse for breaking through a restraint of our own imposing. Julius, will you ride back to the footman, and desire him to make this enquiry for us?"

"No," said Julius, bluntly, and looking extremely sullen; "I had rather ride to Old Nick than move a step towards the premises belonging to any of the Mordington race!"

Adela's countenance fell; and Mr. Somerville, much surprised, said,

"Why, how now, young Pepper-pot! what has moved your noble spirit to such vehement indignation against these unfortunate Mordingtons? What have they done to you? Where did you know them?"

"I knew Adela's sweet favourite at Eton," roughly answered Julius, "and I hate him."

"A very brotherly and tender declaration! But this is all nonsense; you are not old enough yet to know what you love or what you hate. It will be time enough for you to entertain these Montague and Capulet prejudices ten or twenty years hence. So, my good little Adela, if you wish it, we will still go to this proscribed mansion; and Julius will grow cool by the way."

Gratefully thanking him, Adela answered,

"I should have no pleasure in going now; but, indeed, when I proposed it, I did not imagine Julius would have been so offended."

"So I suppose," cried he; "for how should you know any thing about what may have passed at Eton? But you might have waited till you were sure we should *all* have liked it, before you were so ready with your foolish propositions."

Adela coloured, and felt much hurt by such unauthorised asperity; but she was

spared the disagreeable task of making to it any answer, by the zeal and kindness of Mrs. Somerville, who, disgusted at her brother's behaviour throughout the whole affair, reproved him in such plain terms, that, muttering and scowling, he checked his horse's pace, and in a confirmed fit of ill-humour, rode, indignant and alone, during the remainder of the way, at a considerable distance from the carriage.

Talbot Cleveland had been a silent auditor of all that had passed, and being of a nature cheerful, and averse from strife, felt anxious, as soon as Julius was gone, to start a new subject; but Mr. Somerville, knowing that he also was an Etonian, though only of recent date, chose to put some interrogations to him relative to the object of his cousin's rancour—the detested Algernon.

"Tell us," said he, "what has given birth to, and fomented all this absurd enmity? Some of these days, this young 'Squire Mordington will be Viscount Ossely, and my nearest neighbour. I hope I shall not find him of a quarrelsome, insolent temper, disposed to be at variance with every body

around him. Speak out, Talbot; let us hear what kind of a boy *you* think him. We know already what is Adela's opinion, and that of her brother."

"He never quarreled with me, sir," answered Talbot; "and, except by Julius, and some of the friends of Julius, I never heard that he was disliked or complained of. I am not intimate with him, however, for the breach between him and my cousin is so confirmed, that we have kept aloof as if by mutual consent; and nothing would enrage Julius so much, as my making or accepting any advances towards a better acquaintance."

"This irascible little gentleman," said Mr. Somerville, "seems to have the most promising qualifications for the future leader of a faction, of any stripling demagogue I ever heard of! He would have been an invaluable auxiliary, on whichever side he had declared, during the contests between the houses of York and Lancaster: pray Heaven, he may not blow up a hurricane between the illustrious houses of Mordington and Cleveland!"

"At all events," said Adela, addressing Talbot with resumed vivacity, "I hope *you* will not take sides against Algernon, merely because you are a Cleveland?"

"Oh, no; I will not take sides against any one you wish well to."

"I shall wish well to them both; but I am certain, Algernon will not be the most to blame."

"I should be very glad to get acquainted with this early friend of yours, Adela," said Mr. Somerville.

"And so should I," subjoined his wife; "but whilst Julius is here, impetuous and self-willed as he is, the experiment might be hazardous, and the two boys, at their first meeting, would perhaps entertain us with the sight of a set battle."

"Oh, no," cried Talbot; "they would not even speak—they would only look at each other with airs of defiance. They have never fought, and but seldom come to words; for Mordington is stouter and stronger than Julius, and, I believe, disdains, or is ashamed to beat him; but, I own, I have often seen him look as if he wished it, and could hardly forbear."

"To say the truth," cried Mr. Somerville, "I might sometimes find it difficult, in that respect, not to sympathize with him most cordially!"

CHAP. X.

DANCING.

In so retired a situation, and with so turbulent and restless an inmate as Julius, Mrs. Somerville soon discovered that it was by no means easy to provide such a succession of amusements for her young guests, as should maintain them in constant good-humour. There were, of course, neither plays, operas, nor places of public resort of any description to which she could take them; and though Adela and Talbot seemed perfectly contented, Barbara Cleveland, and Julius, still more undisguisedly, shewed frequent symptoms of *ennui,* and of consequent disgust and petulance.

"I will never," thought their perplexed hostess, "fill my house with school-boys and girls again. But, however, as they

are here, for my sins, I must do the best I can to procure them entertainment."

"Julius," said she, one evening that her brother lay stretched upon a sofa, half asleep, "are you fond of dancing?"

"Whom would you have me dance with here, hey, sister Ellen? With Amy? or Barbara's governess? or the *très-chère* Barbara herself? Dost ever condescend to so irrational an amusement, my little Bab? Would it not put thee out of joint, body and mind, and tumble down the whole structure of thy high-soaring philosophy?"

"Let Barbara, and her philosophy alone."

"Which, by the way," interrupted he, "is not proof against provocation—witness the angry flash of those bright eyes, and the tremendous pout of that eloquent lip! —But now, dear sister, proceed; what about my love of dancing?"

"I would, if you and the rest of the party like it, endeavour, from the few families in our neighbourhood, to assemble as many young people as would make a tolerable ball; and you should have a harp and two fiddles; and a supper, after dancing,

and whatever other addition to your entertainment I can devise."

"Oh, let's have these fiddles and the supper by all means!" cried Julius, starting up—"And, really, sister, I must say your are very good-natured for thinking of it!"

"I am glad you have the grace to allow it!" rather drily observed Mr. Somerville.

"Now, my dear sir, though I *may* be a bit of an annoyance to you all sometimes, I can assure you, I know as well as any body how to feel obliged to people when they are particularly kind and friendly; and nobody is oftener so, than sister Elinor!"

Had Algernon been present when Julius uttered this sentence, the resemblance which he had often perceived in him to Adela, would have appeared to him more conspicuous than ever. It is impossible to describe the effect operated upon his countenance by the influence of a grateful or an affectionate sentiment; it was, by nature, cast in one of her finest moulds, and when lighted up with genuine good feelings, acquired a character so prepossessing, that

few could behold it without pleasure and admiration.

The thanks and vivacity with which her scheme had been acceded to, redoubled Mrs. Somerville's anxiety to put it in execution. She shared in Adela's regret, that neither Mordington, his pretty sister, nor the two youthful daughters of Lord Ossely, could be invited to participate in their intended gaieties: but omitting none else within reach, and offering beds to many whose abodes were too remote to render their return till the next day convenient she collected, by dint of perseverance, an assembly of nearly forty persons, to whom, on the appointed evening, she delightedly devoted herself to the task of doing the honours of her house.

Adela, in the midst of all this gay bustle, trod upon air, and was the most gratified and the happiest of any individual present. She danced with Talbot Cleveland, who, young as he was in the talent of professing admiration, evidently beheld her with such animated delight, and attended to her with such unremitting assiduity, that Mr. So-

merville, much amused, gave to him the epithet of her adorer; and if he failed in making the youth desist from paying her homage, at least completely succeeded in rendering him less unguarded in its display.

During a pause in the dancing, whilst those who had been engaged in it were partaking of the refreshments handed about, a young lady, who had formed some acquaintance with Adela, found her way into an apartment adjoining to the ball-room where she was seated with Barbara Cleveland, Mr. Somerville, Talbot, and her brother—

"Do come," cried the busy little informer, addressing them collectively, "and see a poor boy in the next room, who, as a great favour, has just now been brought in by his father, the old man who plays the harp, to see the company dance. Some of the party, struck by the oddity of his appearance, have attempted to engage him in conversation: but he is completely deaf and dumb; though full of animation, and looking every moment as if he was ready to laugh in all our faces. Do pray come; his

father, to amuse us, has been proposing to make him dance a hornpipe!"

"Dance?" repeated Adela, "and completely deaf? Oh, it will be shocking!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Julius, "What should make it shocking, if the boy himself don't mind it? I hate such puling sentimentality! Let's go and see him. I dare say the performance will be a famous clever thing. We may afterwards make him dance a *pas de deux* with the lovely Amy!"

Then, seizing Adela by the arm, he dragged her with him, followed by the rest of the party, to the scene of action.

They arrived, just as the old harper's lively, but unfortunate son, was taking his station at the upper end of the ball-room, to begin his allotted task. At sight of the uncouth figure he presented, Adela and her companions almost started. His hair, of a fiery red, bushy and staring in formidable profusion, and every variety of direction around his brows, gave to his head so disproportioned a bulk, that it was difficult to imagine how it could properly belong to so slender a body. The tanned

complexion accompanying these carroty honours, was of most unusual darkness, amounting almost to the hue of a mulatto. He wore a party-coloured silk handkerchief loosely tied round his neck, and one of his eyes was covered by a large patch. The dress adorning this gracious personage, consisted of a tight scarlet waistcoat, coarse canvass trowsers, worsted stockings, and shoes tied on with packthread. He flourished, previously to commencing his performance, a stout oaken cudgel in his right hand; nodded facetiously to the company, and then, fixing his eyes steadily on the harper, at a given signal, and at the very instant the music began, he set off on his unprecedented undertaking.

But the laughter with which all present were prepared to behold him, speedily, and, most unexpectedly, converted itself into a tumult of applause. The spirit, lightness, and precision, with which he danced; the variety and extreme difficulty of many of his steps, and the perfect ease and composure with which he executed them, could only be exceeded by the astonishment depicted on every surrounding countenance.

Loud and universal commendations followed the rustic bow with which he concluded his exhibition; and, as he directed his steps towards the place where his father sat, more than half the youthful assembly accompanied and flocked around him; some, to express their admiration by smiles and dumb show; some, to slide more substantial offerings into his hand; and others, for the gratification of gaining a nearer view of his extraordinary aspect. Amongst these latter, stood Mrs. Somerville and Adela; the former of whom, as soon as she could secure a hearing from the old harper, distracted by the multiplicity of questions that were asked him, said—

"Some have bestowed upon this poor lad money, which, I suppose, he will give to you; and others are loading him with praises which he cannot hear: but what is there that can be offered to him which he would keep, and really feel pleasure from receiving?"

The youth, who had been looking round him with a disengaged and general smile, extremely advantageous to the display of the only beauty discoverable in his face—

a regular and admirable set of teeth—now, fixing an earnest gaze on the surprised and shrinking Adela, carelessly dropped from his slackened hold all the money that had been given to him, and making a hideous noise, something between a chatter and a scream, suddenly stretched forth his hand, as if tempted to seize upon a cornelian heart, which, suspended to a gold chain, she wore round her neck: but, the next moment, checking himself, he desisted from the attempt, though his eye still remained fixed upon the bauble, with the most manifest expression of coveting eagerness.

Talbot Cleveland, who was standing near enough to observe this action, now addressing Adela with a laugh, said—

"The answer to your sister's question is plain! It is your *heart* that he will feel most pleasure in receiving!"

"Can he really be so childish," said Adela to the harper, "as to wish for such a useless gift as this?"

"Lord love your pretty face, my good young lady," cried the old man, "let the poor boy have it! I warrant he'll take care of it, and neither break nor lose it."

"That's more than could be vouched for all receivers of hearts!" observed Mrs. Somerville; "give him the desired prize, then, my dear Adela, to encourage in a young beginner, so honourable a disposition to good faith."

"What, giveit him to keep?—No, I cannot, indeed; it is one of your own presents."

"Then, I have the better title to urge you to part with it. Come, prepare to surrender it;—some other keep-sake shall supply its place."

Every body joined in pleading the poor boy's cause; and Adela, ashamed of longer resistance, though assured he must be an ideot for desiring it, detached the cornelian heart from the chain to which it was affixed, and, half laughing, half blushing, presented it to its silent yet importunate solicitor. He received it with a strange burst of discordant exultation; kissed it vehemently; thrust it into his waistcoat pocket; and then, as if tired of being a gazing-stock, sat down on the floor, beside his father, and leaning back against the wainscot, put on his hat, pulled it over his face, and

seemed deliberately composing himself for an unceremonious nap.

" He is not a slave to forms !" remarked Mrs. Somerville, regarding him with a smile—" But let him rest in peace ; and do you tell us," added she, turning to the harper, " what else he has been taught, besides dancing so wonderfully ? Can he read ? Has he been able to learn any kind of trade ?"

" He was brought up, madam, by some thriving relations, who have taught him a power of fine things, more than ever I shall know !"

" Will these relations do any thing towards providing for him ?"

" Oh, dear, yes, madam, no fear of that ; I dares to say, he'll be mortal well off, by and by."—

" I am heartily glad to hear it. To him, helpless and unfortunate as he is, easy circumstances seem absolutely indispensable."

" But what," said one of the youg ladies, standing in the circle, " what is the matter with his eye ? Has he lost it ?"

" No, Miss, no, he hasn't quite lost it ; but bless your heart ! he's wild and full of

tricks, and not minding any hindrances, he takes such out-of-the-way fancies, that he's obliged, sometimes, to go about, that poor crippled object, all maimed-like, as you now see him."

"In this case," said Mrs. Somerville, "it is particularly unlucky he should be so frolicksome a genius; you should as seldom as possible suffer him to go out of your sight."

"Very true, madam; but, Lord, he don't much mind me, I assure you!"

The old man then struck a few chords upon his harp, and the sound, operating like magic, was a signal to all the young people, to fly back to their places, and begin a new dance.

When the summons to supper was given, Mrs. Somerville delegated to Adela the task of doing the honours of one of the tables, whilst she herself presided at that prepared for her senior guests. This office, new to her as it was, Adela, anxious to merit the distinction it conferred, performed with the most assiduous and graceful attention to all its duties. Talbot Cleveland was her neighbour and ready assistant; the

group that surrounded her looked cheerful and pleased, and laughter unrestrained, though not boisterous; conversation animated, yet not tumultuous, rendered this repast, as well to its beholders as partakers, one of the pleasantest that was ever given.

Whilst the gaiety in which Adela so cordially participated was at its height, turning her head to speak to a footman, she saw standing at the room door, in a cold and very comfortless situation, the poor deaf and dumb boy, whom, if she thought of at all, she thought of as being at supper below stairs with his father, and the other musicians. He seemed earnestly looking towards her and her party; and concluding that he was hungry, and secretly longing to devour some of the good things upon the table, she heaped upon a plate as much cold chicken, ham, and bread, as it would contain, provided herself with a knife and fork, and hastened with her liberal supply, to the humble and silent intruder. Talbot immediately followed, with a glass and the remains of a decanter of wine; and making signs to him to sit down upon a form behind the door, they placed their respective offer-

ings beside him, encouraging and inviting him to eat. The youth laughed, but it was no longer the laugh of an ideot clown; he bowed, but his bow had wholly lost its peasant's awkwardness; and Adela, turning with some surprise towards Talbot, said,

"This poor creature might be won upon, by a little kindness, to behave like other people! I cannot endure him when he grins and chatters; but his laugh is not unpleasant. I really don't think that he is entirely without sense!"

"Why should you ever have thought it? Persons afflicted as he is, often have a harsh and disagreeable manner of attempting to articulate; but it would be hard to conclude them all fools!"

"Yet why should a great looby like him want to possess such a ridiculous ornament as my poor little cornelian heart? What can he do with it? And why should he be silly enough to prefer it to the money he had received, which would have bought him so many more amusing play-things?"

Talbot frankly acknowledged his inability to solve this enigma; and then, seeing the youth beginning to taste the provisions

with which they had so bountifully provided him, Adela and her cousin returned to their places at the table.

"If I could at all guess," said Barbara Cleveland, who was at once suspicious and fond of the marvellous, "what possible purpose such a frolic could answer, I should be half tempted to believe, that this young purblind dummy is here in a fictitious character!"—

"Perhaps some lover of yours in disguise, hey, Bab?" cried Julius, with a provoking laugh.

"Barbara is celebrated for her sagacity in finding out personages under a mask!" said her brother: "I remember she had shrewd suspicions, when the old sexton of the village church near my father's house in the country was first appointed"...

Here Barbara, with an air of pique, interrupted him, to desire that he would not introduce *her* name into any of his foolish stories!

"But, by the Lord Harry, he shall!" cried the delighted Julius, rubbing his hands in anticipation of some ludicrous anecdote: "Come, Talbot, give us the his-

tory of the old sexton; and here," added he, raising to his lips a glass of wine, "here's to his very good health!"

Talbot, displeased by the dictatorial tone in which his sister had commanded his forbearance, required very little urging to relate, that the memorable sexton in question, happening to possess a good set of features, and a fine head of curling silver hair, Barbara had amused herself for many months, with conjecturing that he was some emigrant prince, or deposed sovereign, reduced to officiate in that degrading capacity by the inconstancy of Fortune, and the sad vicissitudes to which human affairs are liable!

"The poor fellow," continued Talbot, "spoke the vulgar tongue as fluently as British sexton was ever known to speak it: but a strong Suffolk whine, she interpreted into a foreign cadence; the stoop of age, or rather the slouch of vulgarity, she called the bend of sorrow; every movement, she averred, proclaimed the dignity of fallen greatness; and, in the very conveyance of quid of tobacco from his tin box to his c coloured mouth, she discerned a graceft superiority, that could only belong to a

man of illustrious birth and polished education!"

A general burst of laughter, not very flattering to poor Barbara's self-consequence, succeeded this absurd story, which, certainly, had lost nothing in passing through her brother's hands. She bore the temporary derision of the juvenile party with silent haughtiness, though visible indignation; and Adela, not much amused by what she saw gave another pain, to relieve her from the comments with which she was tormented, now said—

"Well, but supposing the poor young man, sitting at the door, quietly eating his comfortless supper, is really deaf and dumb, and the son of the old harper, and no lover, or sovereign in disguise; by what means, I should like to know, has it been found possible to teach him, not only to perform such a variety of steps, but also to dance in such excellent time?"

"You may depend upon it," cried Julius, ery gravely, "he first acquired these won-erful steps by being compelled to practise them upon a heated metal floor, as is the custom in teaching bears!"

"Horrid creature! How barbarous an idea! But by what contrivance could he be instructed to keep so well to the measure?"

"Why, to account for that, another supposition occurs to me, which, perhaps, may be the most rational of the two. This red-haired scarecrow, apparently composed of ugly flesh and blood, may, in fact, be nothing more than an ingenious piece of mechanism, set in motion by invisible springs!"

This idea was vehemently applauded, and Julius, who began to consider himself as the wit of the company, was secretly enjoying his little triumph, when suddenly he felt his arm griped by a hand of iron, that seemed threatening to crush it to the bone! A cry of anguish involuntarily escaped him; and turning to discover who was the merciless inflictor of such pain, he beheld, close at his elbow, the deaf and dumb youth, who, with a glass in his hand, and looking perfectly unconscious and innocent, was making signs that he wanted t[illegible] have it replenished.

"No,—I'll be cursed if I do!" cried the angry sufferer, pushing him roughly away.

"You have the fangs of a diabolical wild cat, and I make no doubt, that I shall wear their precious marks for a month to come!"—

"Oh, don't be in such a passion, cousin Julius!" cried Barbara, maliciously; "Remember your own doctrine of the *invisible springs*; and candidly attribute to their having been too briskly set in motion, the superfluous energy of the poor automaton's squeeze!"

She then beckoned the young man to come round to her chair, and, in high good humour with him, filled his glass, and invited him, by her gestures, to partake of some of the fruit and cakes within her reach: but declining her offer, he bowed to Adela as he raised the glass to his lips, and having drank its contents, apparently to her health, stole quietly away.

From that moment, the company saw of him nothing further. It speedily became known, that the old harper was no permanent inhabitant of the town from whence the other musicians had been hired; but happening accidentally to be there when Mrs. Somerville sent to engage them, and

the customary harper of the place being ill, this stranger had volunteered his services, and offered to be his substitute for the night.

CHAP. XI.

BETTING.

THE period appointed by Mr. Cleveland for the duration of his son's visit was now fast drawing to a close. Barbara and her brother were to depart at the same time. The reluctant murmurs of the latter were incessant. Julius, though eager for change and novelty, as the moment of separation approached, expressed, and really felt—as, indeed, whatever he professed he always meant—the most cordial regret. Barbara, alone, arrived and took her leave with equal unconcern; and exactly proportioned to the frigid temperance of her own feelings, were those, respecting herself, of the social party which she left behind.

On the last evening of their stay at Rosedown, Adela, whilst walking with Julius and Talbot in the pleasure-grounds, found courage, for the first time, to begin talking of her father.

"Does he, my dear Julius, know I am here?" said she. "Will he, do you think, make any enquiries about me, when he sees you? Does he ever speak of me?"

"He never speaks much of any body; but he certainly knows that you are here, for I have mentioned you several times in my letters."

"Has he answered those letters?"

"A pretty question! Do you think I would write to him twice if he did *not* answer me?"

"And has he ever taken any notice of what you said about me?"

"Why, what are you plaguing yourself in this foolish manner for? What does it signify whether he has ever taken notice of it or not? His two answers are neither of them half a page long, and he hardly, even, says a word about my sister Somerville."

"Have you either of these letters in your pocket?"

"Yes, I believe I have one of them;—here it is—you may read if you have a mind. I have read it *once*, and what is more, I have answered it; and that's enough for me, in all conscience."

He then put into her hand, crumpled, torn, and defaced, a letter, which, as she sighing received, Adela could not forbear saying to herself—

"Had this been addressed, by the same writer, to me, should *I* have thus slighted and misused it? Oh, that my father would but *once* put me to the test!"

She read as much as was decipherable of the mangled scroll, and found it, though brief, most affectionately cordial, and almost fraternally familiar. It contained no allusion to any other of the family than Julius; was evidently penned in haste; and dated, as Adela observed, from the country residence of General Cleveland, her uncle.

"This," said she, as she concluded its perusal, "is the first writing of my father's I ever saw. May I keep it, Julius?"

"With all my heart," replied its careless owner. "I should have been mighty glad too, if you had had it to answer. I do hate that bore most confoundedly!"

"You would not thus undervalue the

pleasure of this correspondence, if you were denied it as I am!"

"The deuce, I should not!—Why, I never would have submitted to being denied it! I would have written to him at all events; and so might you, if you had any spirit! Get a letter ready to-night, and I will carry it to him myself!"

"Do, my dear Adela!" interposed Talbot.

"Oh, I dare not for the world!" cried she, turning pale at the mere idea.

"I thought as much!" said Julius, laughing—"but what can you be afraid of, child? Though you think, perhaps, he would devour *you* alive, you may depend upon it, he would not eat your letter! I never knew him relish such unpalateable food!"

"Ah, Julius! This is an excellent jest to you, but it is a very sorrowful business to me. However, do not urge me to write, I entreat; nothing should tempt me, without some encouragement from more experienced advisers, to hazard so great a liberty. Yet, I thank you both, most sin-

" 'Has she any voice? Is she learning music?'

" 'Yes, sir,' answered Julius, very gravely; 'and if all trades fail, and she should be immured for life at the old *physic-shop*, she may be enabled, hereafter, to make a very pretty addition to the bequest of grandmamma, by giving lessons to the little masters and misses who go down to S—— for bathing and sea-air!'

" 'My uncle frowned at this humiliating hint, and turned away with a peevish 'Pshaw!' which drew from the fearless Julius a hearty and unceremonious laugh. Alicia and I made signs to him to forbear; and he abstained, during the remainder of the time we were at my father's, from uttering such hazardous sarcasms. But he is really very zealous in your cause, and truly anxious that you should now live at home, and be admitted to hold your proper place in my uncle's favour and kindness. Alicia is sincere in good-wishes to the same effect; and my father, I am certain, will contribute, by every argument in his power, to forward the accomplishment of so desirable an event.

"Since our return to Eton, the old heart-burnings and animosity between Julius and young Mordington have broken out with more vehemence than ever. I know not whether you will be most concerned at the fact, or amused by its cause.— Just before the last vacations, a crony of your brother's, on hearing that he and I were to pay a visit to Mrs. Somerville in Northumberland, dropped some extremely impertinent hints, in the presence of Mordington, about the vicinity of Rosedown Court to the habitation of Lord Ossely, and expressed a firm belief, that the friendship between Julius and Algernon would be very little increased by so near a residence to each other. Mordington, offended by the boy's manner, demanded what he meant. And this insolent meaning turned out to be, that no sister of Julius Cleveland's would wish to visit or be visited by any of Mordington's relations. A violent quarrel was on the point of ensuing; but some of the other boys interposed, and the business ended in a bet, to a pretty considerable amount, between Algernon and your brother's pert friend. The object of this bet was; that Mordington

should either bring proof that he had gained admission into Mr. Somerville's house; been well received by him and his lady; been a party in whatever amusement might be going forward; spent some hours, and even eat and drank in their mansion; or that he should acknowledge himself the loser, and pay to his adversary the stipulated wager. All this, my dear Adela, he achieved in the semblance of —— the old harper's son. Yes; Algernon Mordington it was, as he has furnished incontestable proof, who, during so great a part of an evening, thus effectually imposed upon our senses, and in every particular fulfilled the terms of his agreement. He has recorded to me all that you said when you rose from table to convey to him his solitary supper; he has brought, in evidence of his veracity, the little *cornelian heart* which you so reluctantly surrendered; in short, his testimony is so clear, ample, and unquestionable, that he has, by general acclamation, been adjudged to have won his bet, and the laugh of the whole school is turned against his opponent. Imagine how the

mortification of this circumstance has tended to exasperate the arrogant partisan of Julius, and even to irritate Julius himself! And above all, judge how the remembrance of the rough squeeze which your brother received from the supposed *Dummy*, contributes to gall and enrage him! Never, my dear Adela, as you would preserve the warm regard that Julius now feels for you, never, after this, speak to him of Mordington as your distinguished friend!

"Your poor little innocent *heart* has been an additional cause of contention. Julius very haughtily demanded either its immediate restoration to you, or its resignation to himself. Algernon equally refused compliance with both these awards; and he is now distinguished, amongst your brother's witty adherents, by the appellation of *the Knave of Hearts!* I much question, however, whether this title has ever been applied to him in his own hearing.

"The length of this letter will not, I hope, quite exhaust your patience. It *should* meet with some favour, for it speaks to you of those you love, though of no one

who more affectionately regards you, than, dear Adela,

"Yours, most sincerely,

"TALBOT CLEVELAND."

Surprised and entertained as Adela was, by this account of the old harper's pretended son, she yet felt seriously concerned that so harmless, though ridiculous a frolic, should have tended to widen the breach between Julius and Mordington; and she likewise experienced something very like pique at the persevering silence and caution with which the latter thought proper to conceal himself, during the whole evening, from *her*.

"It would have been such a pleasure to me," cried she, "to have shaken hands with him; to have heard the well-remembered sound of his voice; to have seen him, if but for a moment, without that hideous red wig! I wonder he could have the heart to remain near me so long, and not once to say, 'Adela, how do you do?' I am sure, he can very little tell when we may meet again."

But the half-angry sensations occasioned

by that part of Talbot's letter relating to her former playfellow, were presently superseded by joy at the information which he communicated respecting her father. She had often been urged to diligence in her studies, by assurances that the securest passports to Mr. Cleveland's heart, would be talents and information; Sir Frederic Rosalvan, the liberal defrayer of all the expenses attending the cultivation of these talents, being unwearied in his endeavours to establish in her mind the most perfect conviction of a circumstance so important to her future destiny. Talbot's assertion, that her musical abilities had been so earnestly enquired into, fully confirmed Sir Frederic's prognostics; and nothing could surpass the indefatigable industry with which she now applied to every pursuit marked out for her by her generous and benevolent adviser.

CHAP. XII.

INVETERACY.

THE two eldest sons of Dr. Hampden, William, and the ever-gentle and well-disposed Reuben, were now fast approaching to the age when it was becoming necessary to decide on their future destination. Their father, prosperous in his profession, and richly provided with friends acquired by his own merit, was amply enabled to give his boys every requisite assistance towards completing their education at College; and wished the eldest to devote himself to medicine, and his brother to make choice of the church. A living, in the gift of one of his wealthiest patients, was likely to become vacant in a very few years; and this living the doctor received a positive promise should then be presented to whichever of his sons made choice of the clerical profession. Reuben willingly accorded with

his father's wishes; but William, acknowledging great reluctance to embrace the plan of life chalked out for him, threw his mother into an agony of alarm, by declaring a determined preference for the army. As a physician, the ambitious youth observed, he should probably be doomed for life to abide obscurely in a remote and paltry country-town, detached from all commerce with the world, deprived of every means of rising to reputation or honour. Should he even establish himself in London, what friends, what recommendations could he there expect? But in the army, he asserted, his attainment of distinction would depend upon his own exertions; he should there stand or fall by his own efforts, or his own neglect. In short, he argued so strenuously in support of this long-cherished, though but newly-avowed project, that his father, with whatever violence to his feelings, both as a husband and as a parent, at length granted a reluctant assent to his wishes; and the self-willed youth, ever till now the hope and delight of his mother's heart, almost broke that affectionate heart, and drove her to despair, by the

sturdiness with which he resisted her supplications, and the cruel composure, as she deemed it, with which he left them, soon after, to enter a military academy.

Algernon Mordington, on learning from Dr. Hampden, with whom he still maintained agrateful and affectionate correspondence, the path of life his two friends had fixed upon, sent to each a valuable present of books adapted to their respective studies; and to his early favourite, Adela, a brief letter from his sister, Eudocia Mordington, the tenour of which was as follows:

"*Mordington Castle, Nov.* 2.

"I HAVE not the pleasure to know you, my dear Miss Cleveland, and yet my brother has talked of you so often, that I almost feel as if I was writing to a friend. He has played the thief at Mr. Somerville's at your expense: the pretty cornelian heart he robbed you of, I have seen. May I venture to own, that the moment he shewed it me, I was seized with a terribly covetous wish to keep it, and to wear it for your sake? Let me indulge this wish; and permit me to substitute for the trinket of which

I deprive you, one which has belonged to myself, and which it would give me equal pride and pleasure to learn that you sometimes condescend to wear in remembrance, dear Miss Cleveland, of

"Yours most truly,

"EUDOCIA MORDINGTON."

Accompanying this flattering little letter came a small pearl cross, the most elegant ornament Adela had yet possessed, and rendered doubly valuable to her by having been the property of Algernon's sister. She wrote her grateful and pleased concurrence in the transfer; and the same day, indulged a proud satisfaction in communicating to Talbot, for the information of her brother (and, if he pleased, of all his school confederates) the unequivocal justification of the *Knave of Hearts*.

Another year had now elapsed, and Adela had not yet been blessed with a sight of her father; had not, in any degree, obtained from him the notice and favour Talbot Cleveland so delusively taught her to ex-

pect. Mrs. Somerville's promised invitation to Rosedown was, however, repeated; and there, Adela had again an opportunity of seeing her brother, and there, also, she became acquainted with her still unmarried sister, Alicia. Both these youthful relations were, in every respect, as kind and friendly to her as she could wish: but they equally avoided feeding her with hopes for which their father's unrelenting coldness gave so little foundation; and, by mutual consent, abstained as much as possible from making him the subject of conversation in her presence.

To the other advantages attending these periodical excursions to Rosedown, was added the benefit to Adela of an early introduction to the best society. Mr. Somerville's fortune, house, and establishment, were large; and the liberality of his heart kept pace with the extent of his possessions. Guests of every degree, amongst the polished and well informed, were welcomed and caressed beneath his roof: and throughout the county, to the sole exclusion of the inhabitants of Mordington Castle, there was not a single family, eminent either for

rank or merit, with which he failed to keep up an easy and cordial intercourse. But the Viscount and his lady, their nearest neighbours, and, as such, the individuals with whom Mr. and Mrs. Somerville most wished to be upon a footing of amity, inflexibly and invariably held aloof. No reason was ever assigned for this singularity; but its unsocial haughtiness was by every one loudly censured, though by none more regretted than by Adela.

Yet, the confidential and juvenile correspondence she long maintained with Algernon, had gradually, and now, almost entirely, ceased. He had quitted Eton a considerable time, and was removed to one of the Universities. Alfred Mordington, Lord Ossely's infirm and suffering son, had breathed his last, leaving the path of succession to the title and estate of his politic father, unmolestedly open to his once-neglected, but now, proudly cherished, cousin. A report soon became prevalent, after the death of this unfortunate young man, that a marriage was in agitation between Algernon, and one of the Viscount's daughters. The rumour easily spread as far as

Rosedown Court, although neither Lord Ossely norany of his family, that summer, visited Northumberland. Julius, who was present when the probability of this alliance was discussed, with well remembered animosity against his school-cotemporary, cried out—

"I never heard a better piece of news in my life! A jubilee ought to be held throughout the land in token of thankfulness to these insolent Mordingtons for intermarrying amongst each other, and forbearing to thrust any of their arrogant sons and daughters into better, or, at least, more unoffending families!"

Mrs. Somerville and Adela looked at him with a reproving shake of the head; and the former gravely said—

"How lasting and bitter are your resentments, Julius!"

"Oh, don't attempt to moralize with me, dear Elinor, about that fellow Mordington! So rooted and confirmed is my detestation of him, that, with all the advantages of wealth, title, and influence he may hereafter possess, I would sooner, much sooner, behold Alicia or Adela lying dead at my

feet, than hear that either of them were likely to give me such a brother!"

"This is abominable, and really wicked enmity!" cried Mrs. Somerville, shocked at his vehemence—"For heaven sake, Julius, talk of something else!"

"Well, well, don't look so piously scared, and I will only say one word more, and then close the chapter. Do you know, that there is as cordial an aversion between old Ossely and my father, as between me and his precious heir? *Your* mamma, ladies," bowing to his sisters Elinor and Alicia, "was once destined to the high honour and dignity of being my Lady Viscountess Ossely. Our papa, a gallant, gay Lothario, in those days, though now a very sober and discreet gentleman, saw this pretty peeress-elect, and taking one of those perverse kind of fancies to her which we are all too apt to take to forbidden fruit, he ogled, and sighed, and swore, and wept—and, at last, so effectually mollified the fair damsel's unambitious heart, as to induce her to forego the splendour of a coronet for the humble privilege of becoming plain Mrs. Cleveland. This heroic sacrifice the

doughty Peer was unreasonable enough to take in extreme dudgeon, and even to condemn as treacherous. There were many apprehensions entertained amongst the friends of the angry noble and the successful commoner, that the dispute would end in a reference to the arbitration of sword or pistol: but no such turbulent proceedings ensued. A herd of interposing mediators compromised the matter upon less sanguinary terms; and they were content, as meek christians ought to be, to hate each other in silence, and to hand down to their posterity, unimpaired, the gentle rancour of their own hearts."

The surprise of Mrs. Somerville and Alicia, not only at the circumstances of this story, but at the levity with which it was told, was both manifest and indignant. Julius, however, heeded not their reprehensions, and laughed at their gravity.

"Why, now, you ought to be very much obliged to me, Elinor," added he, "for saving you, by the relation of so authentic an anecdote, the trouble of crazing your poor brains any longer, with that world of conjecture in which you have been bewil-

dered, to find out the reason why the Oselys never would visit you! I think I have laid *that* subject of perplexity at rest as completely as if I had charmed it to sleep by a necromancer's rod! There are other matters of puzzle and wonder," glancing, unobserved by her, a significant look towards Adela, "which I could, with equal facility elucidate. But believing, as in duty bound, that there is a time to talk, and a time to be silent, I shall withhold, for the present, all further specimen of my sagacity in the art of expounding mysteries."

This hint, as its flighty utterer expected, raised the curiosity of Mrs. Somerville, at all times zealously interested in every thing that related to Adela, and induced her to seize the first opportunity of being alone with her brother to demand its explanation.

"To tell you the truth," cried he, "these interrogations are just what I wanted. I have something upon my conscience regarding poor little Adela, which I am impatient to disburthen. Would you believe, that well as I wish her, and unwilling as I should be to do her any mischief, I am yet, simple as I stand here, in

a great measure the cause, why my father still keeps her in banishment? Aye, you may well stare! But, now, listen to me. At a deuced dull dinner at my uncle's, the Lord knows how long ago, but, however, a good while after I had first seen Adela down here, —happening, when the servants were withdrawn, to cast my eyes round the room in search of something more amusing to look at than my aunt's austere face, or the prim phiz of poor dear ugly Barbara, I suddenly espied, or fancied I espied, a remarkable likeness to Adela in a picture, hanging over the chimney, of a very pretty girl reading to her school-mistress. Alicia was sitting beside me, and giving her a jog, I bade her look up, and told her of the resemblance I had just discovered. As I had not spoken in a guarded voice, my aunt overheard me. Now, *par parenthèse*, be it known to you, that, next to a Mordington, I hate this precious aunt of ours, beyond all other living wights! With the coolest malignity, she says and looks, upon mature deliberation, the vilest provoking things of any plausible Jezabel in creation! What, think you, was her remark upon the resemblance

I had been fool enough to point out? Why this: that it was extremely probable the likeness really existed, since that picture had always been thought, by herself, and many others, very similar in countenance and features to Adela's mother at the time of her marriage with my father. And, then, with an hypocritical sigh, she added—

"I am sorry the poor girl inherits a resemblance that will revive the recollection of a person, it would be so much better should be eternally forgotten!"

"Is it possible," cried Mrs. Somerville, resentfully, "my aunt could make such a speech in my father's hearing?"

"She made it," resumed Julius, "not quite in her usual tone, yet audibly enough for him to catch every word of it. If a look of mine could have killed her, she had not now been alive to make such another! My poor father turned as pale as death; yet said nothing, but poured himself out a glass of wine which almost suffocated him in his haste to swallow it. My uncle eagerly sought to divert the conversation; and I, trembling with passion, gave our blessed aunt such deadly glances, that I

wonder she bore me in the room, or chose to remain in it herself! On our return home,—for it was in town this passed,—my father solemnly commanded me, as I valued my honour and veracity, plainly to tell him, whether I had indeed been struck by the likeness in question, or had, as on so many former occasions, merely been seeking an excuse for making Adela the subject of discourse?—Thus called upon, I could not deny the reality of the resemblance, though, I assured him it was very slight.—He pressed his hand forcibly upon my shoulder after I had spoken; and with great agitation, said,—'Ask me not again, Julius, to receive this poor young creature beneath my roof! Obscurity will be her best defence from the opprobrium attached to her birth. I will not have her mother's name recalled to remembrance; I will not run the hazard of forgetting what is due to a child who is innocent, and, yet, whose likeness to a guilty woman might tempt me to loath and curse her every time she crossed my path!"—

"Dreadful, dreadful!" exclaimed Mrs. Somerville, shuddering, and covering her

face with her hands—"Oh, Julius! Can a father, who has been so indulgent to his other children, be so harsh to this dear, unoffending girl? Is she, with all her beauty, and a purity so spotless, to be sentenced to perpetual seclusion on account of her mother's errors?—I cannot bear the thought! Whilst I have life and a home, she shall never want a friend or an asylum; a friend, I mean, who shall draw her merits forth to view; who shall introduce her to the world upon an advantageous and honourable footing!—And you, my dear Julius, who will hereafter have such ample power to serve her; to enlarge her slender pittance; to afford her countenance in society—you, I trust, will act by her the part of a generous, and really affectionate brother!"

"I hope," said Julius, "you do me the justice, without requiring from me solemn protestations, to believe that all this is fully my intention. But, dear Elinor, should my father pay you a sudden visit, what will you do then? Where will you send poor Adela to keep her out of his way?"

"I would not send her any where. My father never forbad my receiving her; nay,

he knows, and I should therefore suppose, tacitly approves, her annual visits to us. If he commanded her not to be brought into his presence, she should live in my apartment: but he never should be furnished with an excuse for perseverance in his unnatural avoidance, by being taught to believe, that I had dismissed her like a culprit from the house!"

Mrs. Somerville spoke with an honest fervour that heightened the colour in her cheeks, and increased the animation of her eyes; and Julius, laughing at the prompt emotion she displayed, cried out,

"I like thy spirit well, my *serene* and placid sister!—Good Lord! How these make-believe gentle souls, when once they are put into commotion, sparkle, bounce, and fly! But thou dost bounce, most noble Nell, in so good a cause, that I not only commend—I adore thee for it!"

He then gave her a hasty, but affectionate embrace, and sallied forth on his accustomed morning ride with Mr. Somerville.

The projected marriage of Algernon Mordington, a vague report of which, had already travelled into Northumberland, was

fully confirmed, at the approach of autumn, by a letter which Adela received from her friend, Ruth Hampden. Mordington, she said, had lately written to her father, in his accustomed style of frankness and affection, to claim his good-wishes, and his congratulation: he had sent, she added, the kindest messages to the whole family, Adela included; and to Ruth's two eldest brothers the most cordial invitation to pay him a visit in town the ensuing winter. "The marriage," Ruth concluded, "must, ere this, be over; for he announced that it was fixed for last Tuesday. Do you not join with us most sincerely in wishing him happy? But, how young a bridegroom,—only just twenty! My father says he should have taken, or rather, his uncle should have allowed him more time to look about him."

Adela had no reason, since Julius had now quitted Rosedown, to withhold from public communication the contents of this letter. Mr. and Mrs. Somerville listened to the intelligence with tranquil wishes for the young man's felicity, not wholly unmixed with regret, that he had thus indissolubly strengthened his connection with

a family so unfriendly to their own: whilst the surprise of Adela, had it not been lessened by the rumours of this event which she had previously heard, would almost have disposed her to suspect, that the Hampdens were trying experiments upon her credulity. An engagement so serious, entered into for life, by one she could yet scarcely prevail upon herself to think of but as a school-boy, seemed to surpass belief! she mentally protested it was as ridiculous as if she had married herself: and hastening to her own room with the open letter in her hand, and a laugh upon her face, she eagerly proclaimed the extraordinary news to the faithful, and scarcely less astonished, Amy.

"Ah, good young Massa Algernon!" exclaimed the unguarded nurse, "What great pity he in such a hurry! Me always meant him take you for wife!"

"Take me!" repeated Adela, staring with unaffected amazement at this suggestion, "My dear Amy, how can you talk such wild nonsense?"

"It no nonsense at all, dear Missy. He always love you, he always say, you prettiest girl in the world; he make you kind, and

good-tempered, merry, nice husband; and me very, very sorry he go throw himself away upon proud, fine cousin!"

"If I was not quite sure," cried Adela, "that you are talking at random, I should ask you, Amy, why you speak in such harsh terms of Algernon's poor bride: but as I am well aware that you can know nothing about her, I feel no uneasiness at what you say."

"Me no want you, dear Missy, to feel uneasiness; but me *do* know something about her. The servants at Mordington Castle, no mind what they tell; no care either for lord or lady; and they say, and me hear all what they say, down stairs—they say, one of their young Missys, she make love to Massa Algernon; and when he by, O, she smile so sweet, and speak so kind; and when he *not* by, she so cross; and huff her sister, and pout her father, and vex her mother, and make all the servants run, and give nothing but trouble to all the whole house!"

Adela looked aghast at this alarming account: but, ever willing to indulge hope, after a few minutes reflection, she said,

"So odious a portrait, if, indeed, it can resemble any one related to Algernon, is not the likeness of the cousin he has married! Her smiles in his presence, could not disguise her real character from his sister; and do you imagine she would have forborn to warn her brother of the danger of making such a choice? The eldest Miss Mordington, he always in his letters, spoke of very highly; and it is her, I have not any doubt, he has married."

Amy had no positive means of disproving a conjecture to which Adela seemed to find such comfort in clinging; and, more disposed to condemn than applaud herself for what she had already unnecessarily proclaimed, she affected to be convinced by her young lady's reasoning, and talked immediately of other things.

CHAP. XIII.

REPININGS.

To the other grievances that had marked the progress of Adela's early years—her mother's lamentable dereliction from conjugal fidelity, her own banishment from the paternal roof, and the untimely loss she had sustained of her grandmother's protection, was added, just as she attained her eighteenth year, the afflicting intelligence of the decease of another of her most anxious and invaluable friends. This was Sir Frederic Rosalvan. When the unforeseen tidings reached her, she was at Rosedown Court; and her first impulse would have been to hasten with sympathizing sorrow to the lonely widow—the truly pitiable survivor of a man whom she had just reason, but for one unfortunate cause, to revere and honour. Dread of her father's displeasure, however, distracted and held poor

Adela in suspense and awe. The letter containing an account of Sir Frederic's sudden decease, was penned, at her mother's desire, by a confidential attendant; it spoke of her lady's grief in terms that led to the apprehension it wore a character of the gloomiest despair. She had not, the humble writer observed, a single friend or adviser near her; Sir Frederic, it was feared, had died without completing and signing his will; and her mistress was in hourly dread of being driven by his relations from the quiet asylum she had so long inhabited. Yet no direct attempt was made to prevail on Adela to undertake the hazardous experiment of paying her a visit; but every line betrayed that such an act, at a time of calamity so heavy, would be more healing to her mother's suffering spirit, than any other species of consolation that could be tendered to her.

The difficulties in which Adela was involved on this occurrence, were canvassed over, and most feelingly weighed and p[...] ticipated in, both by Mrs. Som[...] her ever-benignant partner[...]

agreed, that, had she been a cherished and established resident in her father's mansion, every dictate of duty and propriety ought to have withheld her, unless sanctioned by his authority, from paying to his divorced wife particular personal attention; but, cast off as she was, the case appeared to them widely different; and their hearts whispered what their lips scarcely dared breathe, that thus abandoned by one parent, there could be little reason to justify her neglecting the offered attachment of the other, especially whilst that other was in distress and sorrow. Yet, not to rest the sole decision of a question which they deemed so important, upon their own judgment, Mrs. Somerville undertook to write to Julius, and urge him to give *his* opinion of the affair. He was slowly recovering, she knew, from a dangerous indisposition, but, she hoped, was now in a state to send a circumstantial answer to their enquiries. Meanwhile Adela's heart dictated, and she ...ed to dispatch the most soothing and ...nces to her widowed mother; ...ke no promises of repair-

ing to her, but she expressed, as she really felt, the most ardent desire to be permitted to contribute to her relief and comfort; professed the greatest anxiety to hear *of* her, or *from* her, speedily again, and urged to her every motive she could suggest for struggling to support with courage the calamity which seemed so nearly to overwhelm her.

As early as Mrs. Somerville could reasonably expect, she received the following answer from her brother:

"Dear Elinor,

"I WRITE in pain, so I shall not write much.

"My father has learnt by the newspapers, the death of Sir Frederic Rosalvan. He was in my room when the paragraph first struck my eye, and anxious, on Lady Rosalvan's account, to discern its effect upon him, I read it, as if taken by surprise, aloud. He started from his chair at the abhorred name, and walked in great disturbance about the room. *Gentle feelings,* my dear Elinor, were far from being the

most conspicuous :—we are good haters in our family! Adela's visit must not depend upon the issue of any application made to him: the project, indeed, had better not be referred to his decision: but let her, by all means, perform this act of almost indispensable duty. I am strongly in favour of the step; and should blame ever ensue, either to her or to yourself, say boldly, that I, the brother of Adela, approved, and even *advised* the measure; and be assured, that with equal boldness, I will justify and avow my interference! I love my father; but after all, I see not why we should *now*, at least in private as well as public, wholly neglect my mother.

"I am getting well as fast as a silent and dull room, dieting, and weakness from loss of blood will allow me. I wish you had been in town to nurse me! Alicia does not exchange the pleasures of rural retirement for the dissipation of London till next spring; and then only, if Mr. Erington revives. He is at present sorely bad—I suspect, in a decided consumption. She had better never have married him.

"Adieu, dear Ellen. Remember me to Mr. Somerville, and believe me your ever affectionate brother,—JULIUS CLEVELAND."

This answer, which, by its bluntness, and its peremptory tone of fearless independence, was so characteristic of its rash and undisciplined writer, Mrs. Somerville only communicated to Adela in part; suppressing whatever related to the illness of her brother, as judging such information wholly useless, and, at this time, merely calculated to increase, unnecessarily, the concern and anxiety she already suffered. The counsel which Julius gave, so consonant to Adela's earnest wishes, was acted upon without delay. She made willing preparations for her journey, the instant its propriety seemed admitted; and Mr. Somerville, with the considerate affection that marked all his proceedings towards her, undertook to accompany and protect her on the way. This offer was the more grateful to Adela, as she flattered herself that if Lady Rosalvan should be found involved in difficulties with Sir Frederic's heirs, the presence of a man so respectable, would greatly contribute to

support and encourage her. Amy—so justly denominated by Julius his sister's *inseparable*—of course attended her on this expedition; and Mrs. Somerville, with the most generous solicitude, did every thing in her power to promote their comfort on a journey, which yet, by depriving her at once of the society of her husband and her sister, so essentially diminished her own.

Adela had never seen her unhappy mother since the memorable interview, which, when a child, passed between them at S——. At that time, she knew not, it will be remembered, the close affinity that bound them to each other. But Dr. Hampden, pressed from year to year to encourage the correspondence Sir Frederic wished her to keep up with his wife, had at length deemed it expedient to reveal to his young ward, as much of her mother's story as served to account for so persevering a habit of intercourse. The melancholy truth had been communicated with every extenuating circumstance a tale of such a nature could admit. Adela, discarded by her father, and never encouraged to love him, dwelt upon the idea of her mother with peculiar

fondness and commiseration. Their mutual letters were as tender as the longest and most intimate association under the same roof could have made them; and her impatience, as they speeded on their journey, to reach its termination, could scarcely have been greater, had she been hastening to a parent from whose fostering care mere accident had caused her to undergo a temporary separation.

Lady Rosalvan, prepared for the visit about to bless her, by a note dispatched, express, from the last post-house at which they changed horses, was yet so nearly overcome by mingled emotions of gratitude, conscious shame, and maternal affection, that Adela trembled, lest she should behold her sinking from her arms, in utter insensibility, to the floor. The violence of these feelings, however, was relieved by tears, and the soothing endearments of her lovely comforter. With alternate smiles and sadness, Lady Rosalvan gazed upon the blooming face, on which, hitherto, no self-reproach, no tardily-repented errors, had imprinted their baneful and indelible traces.

Such as Adela now appeared, *she* once remembered to have been; such as, at that moment, she, with bitter reflection, acknowledged herself—oh, might Adela never become!

Mr. Somerville, on this first evening of the long deferred meeting between mother and daughter, forbore all intrusion upon their privacy, and retiring immediately to the apartment allotted to him, beguiled the time with a book, till his usual hour of betaking himself to rest. In the morning, Lady Rosalvan met him in the breakfast-room; she was now more tranquil, though the habitual dejection of her spirits, struggling with the new-born sentiments of joy which Adela's arrival had awakened, still gave to her countenance an expression difficult to define, between animation and languor. Infinite beauty was yet visible in her whole person; she was faded and pale, but her features were unimpaired; her deportment was graceful though diffident; her movements gentle, unhurried, and feminine; and her general appearance, in Mr. Somerville's eye, was so captivating, that

she immediately impressed him with sentiments of the truest pity, and the most lively interest and admiration.

In the course of that day, the only one he meant to spend with her, unless his services could be particularly useful, he gathered from her, in the absence of Adela, a circumstantial account of the present posture of her affairs. The principal heir of her deceased husband, she informed him, was his brother, an unmarried man, and one who, fortunately for herself, betrayed no avidity for money, nor any disposition to torment her by contesting the *spirit* of Sir Frederic's will, however it might, in the *letter*, be found open to chicane. With this gentleman, she had, the day previous to Adela's arrival, been called upon, as she acknowledged, with terror and reluctance, to hold a conference. The unsigned will was produced and examined. Some points in it, he frankly avowed a disinclination to comply with ; but they were points, she added, not very material to her future well-being, and she waved all pretension to solicit their confirmation. The

result of the amicable interview was, that, during *her own life*, she should retain possession of the mansion she now occupied, and all that it contained; that, for the same period, she should enjoy the annual interest of a sum fully adequate to its support, and to her own circumscribed wishes; and that, at her death, she should have the power of bequeathing to whomsoever she pleased, the clear and permanent possession of five thousand pounds; but the house, its library, pictures, plate, &c. were to revert to the present Baronet, or his heirs.

"These," said Lady Rosalvan, "I surely ought not to consider as hard terms. They certainly are not equivalent to the munificent intentions of the testator; but, from a stranger, from one on whom I can have no lawful claim, and who might, perhaps, had he been so inclined, have controverted my title to every part of this provision, the arrangement cannot be esteemed otherwise than fair and liberal. My only cause of regret," concluded she, "is, that so little will be at my disposal in favour of those who survive me. Ah, Mr. Somerville, it was not the design of the benevolent pro-

tector I have lost, to omit in this last deed, the name of my poor injured Adela! The unhappy predicament in which she stands with her unrelenting father, always filled him with alarm and sorrow. Portionless, or nearly portionless; exiled from her native home; injured, rather than benefited by the existence of her mother; countenanced partially by the family of her father—yet, innocent, deserving, and in the full bloom of life—is not hers a fate of peculiar severity?"

"Permit me," answered Mr. Somerville, "to represent to you, my dear Lady Rosalvan, that you behold our Adela's circumstances, present as well as future, in too gloomy a point of view. To reply categorically to all you have been stating. *Portionless*, with three thousand pounds certain, the bequest of her grandmother, she surely cannot with propriety be termed: the sum is small, I allow, for one so wealthily connected, and so highly cultivated; but Adela, let us hope, will meet with those, disinterested and rational enough, to perceive, that she is intrinsically above all price, and requires not the aid of fortune

to heighten her attractions. *Exiled*, she, unquestionably, has hitherto remained: but, as her father has never seen her since her childhood, I still flatter myself, when the time comes that they shall meet, he will learn to appreciate her value. Meanwhile, she loses nothing by not being in his house, which, since the marriage of my wife's sister, contains only himself and his son, and would be a very uneasy residence for so young a female, and one so little acquainted with the world. *Injured by the existence* of a mother she so devotedly loves, be assured she will never consider herself. As for the *partial countenance* you imagine she receives from Mr. Cleveland's family, I am happy to tell you, that the assertion is almost totally unfounded. Julius, her nearest natural protector, next to his father, unequivocally demonstrates himself her staunch friend. General Cleveland, her uncle, has urged upon her the kindest invitation to spend the ensuing spring at his house in town, regardless of his brother's approbation or displeasure. My wife and Mrs. Erington, to say nothing of Talbot Cleveland or myself, love her with the most

faithful and sincere affection; and she is adored in the family of her respectable guardian, Dr. Hampden. Now, is this a destiny so *very* calamitous, Lady Rosalvan, as your imagination represented?"

"I own, with grateful joy, that it is *not!*" cried she—"But, tell me, sir, is her father acquainted with the journey she has now undertaken?"

"No, my dear madam; yet, be not apprehensive of consequent mischief. Julius consents, nay, offers, to be wholly responsible for its effects:—and Julius, you probably know, is all-powerful with Mr. Cleveland, and nearly secure of impunity, whatever he may venture."

"And Julius, then," resumed she, a ray of joy beaming from her languid eye, "is also, in this instance, a friend to *me!*"

"In *every* instance he would be so, were he in proper circumstances to manifest it!"

"Oh, Mr. Somerville! How this conversation has tranquillized and cheered me! One thing, however, remains to be settled. Tell me the utmost extent of time I may be allowed to detain my daughter."

"Keep her with you," said he, "for a month, certain; and let her longer abode here be a matter of after-consideration. Dr. Hampden is entitled to have a voice in the affair, and ought to be consulted. Perhaps, he will object to her wintering in a part of the island so much colder than she has been accustomed to; and, in that case, I am sure you will have no wish to retain her. Meanwhile, rest satisfied, that in having this excellent girl for an inmate, you possess a real treasure. Though her nature is sociable and communicative, she can be as blithe, as animated in retirement, as in the gayest party. Zealous in her pursuits, ingenious and persevering, the day is never too long for the various occupations in which she delights to engage. Her talents and her love of reading, afford her resources inexhaustible against lassitude or disgust in all weathers, in all situations, and at all hours. Never will you behold upon her face the slightest indication of discontent, however profound the seclusion in which you may dwell: yet, place amusement and society fairly within her reach, and she will grasp at them with all the vivacity of youth and high spirits; and enjoy their pleasures with

greater zest, than many who fancy there is no happiness apart from a crowd.—I speak from experience, dear madam; she has been at Rosedown Court, when the heavy rains of closing autumn have so much injured our roads, that, during many weeks, scarcely a single individual has been able to approach our dwelling. At such periods, Mrs. Somerville has been charmed by the truly domestic qualities which Adela has unconsciously displayed; her playful good-humour, her promptness to contribute to the amusement of others, and ever active powers of ensuring her own, gave wings to time—transformed hours into minutes, and days into hours!"

Lady Rosalvan listened to this warm eulogium with real admiration of her on whom it was uttered, and with smiling approbation of him by whom it was pronounced. Yet, an internal and unerring monitor, whispered, that not thus could Adela have submitted to loneliness and confinement, had all prospect of brighter days been eternally obscured——had memory, fraught with gloom and sorrow,

'Still told of time mispent, of comfort lost,
Of fair occasions gone for ever by;
Of hopes too fondly nurst, too rudely crost,
Of many a cause to wish, yet fear to die.'

Mr. Somerville's departure the morning after this conversation, and the uninterrupted *téte-à-téte* to which Adela and her mother were then left, speedily put to the test that satisfied spirit for which she had been so highly extolled. The house in which she now resided, was detached from all contiguous abodes, and surrounded by plantations, chiefly of evergreens, that nearly embosomed, and totally deprived it of all distant or varied prospects. The domestics, not numerous, were grave and elderly people, clad in deep mourning, and performing, by long habit, the duties of their several stations with the regularity of clock-work. The sound of laughter, or the voice of glee, was never heard amongst them; and the gayest living creature Adela was able to discover about the mansion, was a poor caged-up bullfinch, whose monotonous piping, however, was so fatiguing

to her ear, that she was glad when custom began to render her almost insensible of its melancholy exertions. Her walks around this cheerless domain, were necessarily circumscribed, and consequently unamusing. Lady Rosalvan, a prey to alternnate sadness or apathy, had also suffered personal inactivity to usurp such dominion over her, that, except in a carriage, she never stirred beyond her garden or her shrubbery. Adela neither wished to leave her, nor to hazard distant peregrinations entirely alone: to the garden or the shrubbery, therefore, she, likewise, was confined. Within doors, ample were the compensations for this privation which she might have enjoyed. The library, Sir Frederic's chief solace and delight, collected at a great expense, classed with the nicest judgment, and consisting of the best authors in nearly every language, offered her temptations to indulge her love of reading, which would almost have driven to flight every wish to cultivate other pursuits. An excellent piano-forte, requiring nothing but to be put in tune, held out to her the faculty of exercising herself in a different, and also a very favourite study: and

the valuable and well selected pictures, by many of the most eminent Italian masters, adorning the walls, seemed to invite her, as often as she looked up, to seize so favourable an opportunity of endeavouring to improve herself by drawing from them. Yet, to none of these occupations, could she, with real satisfaction, apply. Lady Rosalvan, in a spacious house, where the free range of every apartment was alike open to her, chose, with a sort of perverseness frequently attending superfluous advantages, to confine herself to *one* room, and that the worst, and least tempting in the building. Habit chained her down to it, rather than endeared it; and though she could not defend her selection, it would have given her pain to break the spell; and the quiescent companion she had now obtained, was too reluctant to inflict upon her uneasiness of any description, long to persist in soliciting a removal. Yet this provoking den, was almost the only part of the house where space was wanting for the reception of the instrument; where there hung no pictures; and where there appeared not a single shelf for books. These last,

however, might be brought to it; but when they came, Adela's taste in chusing them, was found to differ from her mother's almost as much as their taste in sitting-rooms. The indolent and unhappy recluse, incapable of bestowing upon superior works the degree of attention, and the spirited perseverance which they demanded, had long accustomed herself to the exclusive perusal of Novels and Romances. Adela could with pleasure, occasionally in an evening, after a day more usefully spent, have read aloud some of these, and interested herself in the ingenuity of their fictitious perplexities: but, from morning till night, and week after week, to pursue no other species of lecture was a punishment to her of the most mortifying kind. She sometimes ventured, though with caution, to insinuate her contempt of so much romantic insipidity; and Lady Rosalvan, too indulgent to continue imposing a task, obviously disagreeable upon her, took the book gently out of her hands; acknowledged the folly both of the authors and readers of these flimsy works—but making no attempt to seek amusement from better writers, she

either finished the volume to herself, or laid it by for perusal in her own room; and, sighing and supine, sat looking at the fire, watching the clouds, or regarding with silent dejection, her concerned and wondering daughter.

Adela could not long behold this wearisome mode of existence, without hazarding to make upon it some observation.

"My dearest mother," said she, "how comes it that you who, as I have heard Mrs. Somerville aver, was admired for your various talents; you who were a good musician; understood French and Italian; had attained to great excellence in drawing, and were so expert in all kinds of elegant female works,—how comes it—forgive this freedom, my dear mother—that you now thus totally neglect all these acquirements, and spend your life in such irksome inactivity?"

Lady Rosalvan faintly coloured, yet shewed no resentment, and candidly answered,

"The question you ask is natural; its answer, dearest girl, is but too easy! Those talents you speak of, such as they

were, I attained in days of youthful energy, when all before me was glowing with hope, life, and animation. I possessed not, Adela, your indefatigable yet unambitious spirit, eager to acquire knowledge, yet thoughtless of displaying it. No; differently educated, every thing I learnt was for the meed of public applause, not for the solace of domestic privacy. I was early accustomed to believe that my establishment depended upon the industry with which, to the beauty bestowed upon me by nature, I should add the lustre of fashionable accomplishments. Genuine abilities I had none but of the most frivolous description: I could dance well, and learnt it without difficulty; but my ear for music was defective; in studying languages, I had to struggle against a treacherous memory; and my drawings were mere impositions—childish and incorrect outlines, muddily coloured, and then committed to the improving hand of a master, to be afterwards framed, hung up, and exhibited as my productions. Yet the reputation of talents certainly attached itself to my name, however superficial were my claims to it. Mr.

Cleveland, my dearest Adela, married me under that erroneous impression—married one whom he believed, not only in personal graces, and mental accomplishments, to be an angel, but whom he also expected to find, in temper and understanding, the best and wisest of created beings! Alas! alas! in *one* only of these exorbitant expectations had he the smallest chance of escaping disappointment! My wisdom and talents I have frankly described to you; they assuredly were ill-calculated to confirm the lofty ideas he had entertained of their superiority. My personal attractions losing the charm of novelty, soon lost also the power of blinding him to my intellectual deficiencies. Nothing then, on trial, proved equivalent to his high-wrought hopes, except my temper, and that, however thoughtless and flightly, was by nature excellent. Would he had been content to regard it as some foundation for conjugal happiness! But he soured it, my Adela, by supercilious taunts, by avowed contempt, and shortly after, by harsh measures of injudicious authority. Indignant and amazed, I sought to defy his restrictions: I retorted aversion

for disdain; and hopeless of indulgence at home, became insatiable of amusement and admiration abroad. For a while, I fancied myself triumphant; my aim was accomplished—I had rendered him suspicious and disturbed; my punishment soon followed, and I found that peace and reputation were irretrievably gone!"

Here Lady Rosalvan, much agitated, paused, and leant her head against the arm of the sofa in evident anguish; whilst Adela, dismayed at having awakened such a train of self-upbraiding reflections, could only, with silent affection, rise and embrace her, and internally resolve never again to lead to so distressing a subject. Lady Rosalvan, in a few minutes, recovered courage to look up.

"Adela," said she, fondly returning her caresses, "make but of my story a salutary use, and I shall think its humiliating circumstances can never be too minutely detailed."

"My dearest mother," cried Adela, "if you knew the pain it inflicts upon me to hear you thus allude to the unfortunate

past, you would spare me now and for ever, all such retrospections."

"Pain, my poor girl, your wretched mother is now alone qualified to give you. I cannot, as any other parent would — justly proud of such a daughter—I cannot participate in the brilliant visions opening to your youthful fancy. Whatever may be your success in life, *I* shall never witness it. Condemned to ignominious privacy, the prosperity of my children will never, but by rumour, become known to me. The higher they rise, the greater will necessarily be their obligation to sink my name in oblivion. Guilty of my own fall from an honourable station; repulsed by my own frailty from society and public esteem, I yet can acquire no fortitude to support with resignation the consequences of former misdeeds. Murmuring, repining, miserable, as you now behold me, have I invariably been almost from the first hour the ill-fated Rosalvan led me to this retreat. I was not formed for solitude, Adela, though I am compelled to embrace it. Its unwearied tranquillity is to me like a living death—it

alternately palls, stupifies, or drives me to the verge of desperation! I loath the present; look back with agonizing regret upon the past; and the future seems all a dreary blank, presenting to me nothing but the prospect of a friendless, desolate old age, terminating in a dissolution of unpitied terror!"

Adela's blood ran cold at so horrible a picture, and tears of unfeigned and deep commiseration trembled in her eyes; yet, by a painful effort, endeavouring to disperse them, and again throwing her arms round Lady Rosalvan's neck, she said, in an accent of gentle expostulation,

"My dearest mother, repel these disconsolate and heart-breaking anticipations! They resemble too much the suggestions of wilful despair, to be of hallowed origin! They *bear no healing on their wings*, but are dark and dreadful, and fraught with mischief and with peril! Let your daughter be your comforter, your mental physician! I have been taught, with simplicity, (by one zealous to practise what she taught) the pure doctrines of Christianity. Let me urge to you the soothing precepts she incul-

cated. Who would speak to you of mercy and divine compassion with more ardent anxiety to impress upon you their belief? But you must be submissive and patient, my beloved mother! Moody heaviness of heart, thankless disgust of life, and black forebodings of unmixed evil—these can only be called aggravations of offence. With many deprivations, under which you are called to bow your head with the profoundest humility, you have yet many, nay, countless blessings, for which it becomes you to be grateful. You are comparatively affluent, and you are wholly uncontrouled; —dispense amongst your needy and suffering neighbours, the overplus of that affluence, and if you visit not the mansions of the gay and prosperous, visit the cottages of the poor; be bountiful, be kind, be consoling amongst them, and their blessings will draw down consolation upon your own head. This first of all earthly duties, doing good as you would that good should be done unto you, will, when duly performed, inspirit, refresh, and invigorate you for the performance of every other laudable act: you will pray with

more fervour and confidence; you will survey the beauties of creation with more grateful admiration; your reflections, when alone, will cease to be so bitter; the idea of employment will lose its disgust, and the prospect of solitude its horror! But why, let me ask, why should you devote yourself to such rigorous loneliness? This is not a barren desert; there are houses within reach, and those houses seem to be inhabited. Surely, my dear mother, it must be your own fault, that their occupiers have never sought to become your associates. The wife of Sir Frederic Rosalvan, leading a life of regularity and the strictest decorum for so many years, would long ere this have found companions, perhaps agreeable and deserving friends, amongst them, had she been disposed to encourage their admission. Dear mother, reform this too rigid and self-denying system; reform it for *my* sake, if not, at first, for your own. Let me behold within these walls *the human face divine;* and remember, that though resigned to endure seclusion when indispensable, I am of an age infinitely to prefer cheerful society. Dr. Hampden has

consented, in the letter I received from him yesterday, to my remaining with you till the beginning of spring. But, good my mother," continued Adela, more gaily, "think you I mean, without remonstrance, to be buried, the whole winter through, in deep snows amidst these wild Scottish mountains, unseeing and unseen? with nothing better to listen to from without, than the bleak howling of the blast; or from within, than the Dead March so woefully piped by your indefatigable bullfinch?"

Lady Rosalvan, charmed for a while from the sense of incurable wretchedness by the mixture she discerned in her daughter's character of vivacity, seriousness, softness and understanding, caught from her some sparks of her own animation, and affectionately pressing her hand, answered,

"You have indeed rendered me, my beloved girl, fully sensible of the cruelty of thus immuring you. The kindness with which you have been willing to sacrifice for my solace the society of your youthful and long-valued friends, merited from me a better recompense. But, had I been disposed to seek dissipation and amusement on

your first arrival, that event succeeded so closely the death of poor Rosalvan, that the profoundest retirement, for a time at least, seemed as much my duty as it was my choice. The case is now altered. At the end of two months, it is allowable, no doubt, to admit such neighbours as may be willing to bestow upon me their leisure. How few there are of that description residing within ten miles of this place, you, my Adela, who have inhabited a part of the kingdom so infinitely more populous, can probably form no idea. Three houses containing females above the rank of peasants, are all that can be met with in this district. The remotest of these, is tenanted by an English family retired hither, I believe, upon motives of economy. I knew something of them in my early life, and therefore could feel no courage to seek a renewal of the acquaintance in my present circumstances. The occupiers of the next residence, are a Scottish nobleman, his lady, and two unmarried daughters. With the nobleman, Sir Frederic was upon very friendly terms; he is a man of taste in literature, of polished manners, and of great rectitude of charac-

ter: but his lady never deigned to bestow upon me the slightest notice. She probably is of opinion that her daughters would be contaminated by holding any intercourse with so degraded a being; or, perhaps, the scrupulous sanctity of her own morals, permits her not to give countenance to vice in the person of one she deems so vile a sinner! I pass her carriage sometimes in my airings; and it is curious to observe the pharisaical disgust her countenance assumes at my approach. Ah, my Adela—when virtue is taught to appear in so unlovely a garb, what prejudice is done to her cause!—The remaining mansion of which I wish to speak, contains, during two-thirds of the year, a being whom, next to yourself, I love and value beyond all other creatures in existence. Her name is Cameron; she is of English extraction, but married, in her early youth, a Scottish officer, now abroad with his regiment. His mother is still living, and to her belongs the house in which resides my friend. She has been absent these last three or four months on an annual visit to her relations in the South. In a very few days I expect her return, and

great will be my pride in presenting you to her, and my pleasure in introducing her to you."

"Meanwhile," said Adela, "what becomes of this lady's mother-in-law? How does it happen that we have never seen her?"

"I seldom," answered Lady Rosalvan, "go to the house expressly in search of *her*; she is well-meaning and respectable, but not to me, a desirable associate. Her broad Scottish dialect, often to my comprehension, unintelligible, and her ceaseless hurry and irritation in the conduct of her domestic affairs, annoy and importune me. But the younger Mrs. Cameron, with a softness of temper which enables her to assimilate with characters the most opposite to her own—with a candour which induces her to make allowances for faults and foibles from which she is happily exempt, lives unruffled and at her ease with this perturbed old lady, and has even succeeded in winning her utmost regard."

Adela, much prepossessed in behalf of her mother's friend by so favourable a description, and gratified, at the conclusion of their conference, to behold that mother

so infinitely more composed than at its commencement, now had the additional satisfaction of being able to prevail upon her, to venture forth on a walk of considerably greater extent than any she had hitherto succeeded in inducing her to take. They entered, in their way home, one or two of the neighbouring cottages, enquiring, as well as their little skill in the language would allow, into the circumstances of their inhabitants. Adela was chief interrogator on these occasions; she loved the simple and industrious poor; and never addressed herself to any of that description, without the most manifest signs of regard, interest, and sometimes, even respect. Lady Rosalvan spoke less: but she dispensed her bounty amongst those who seemed in peculiar indigence, with a ready hand; and she listened to their narratives with no apparent impatience.—During the remainder of the day, her good and lovely daughter had the joy of perceiving that she seemed less a prey to that vague restlessness, miscalling itself, and in some measure, perhaps, mistaking itself for sorrow, than she had yet seen her.

Thus, by gradual endeavours, seeking to

awaken to the pleasures of benevolence, a disposition grown almost torpid, but naturally compassionate and liberal; enchanted at her daily increasing success; and pleased, since she found difficulties in pursuing more intellectual occupations, to obtain her mother's permission to work for those amongst the cottage children whom she had seen particularly ill clad; Adela, in cultivating the virtues of her heart, found yet higher gratification than in improving the acquirements of her understanding. Whilst singing over her coarse and homely employment, she forgot her books, her pencil, and her instrument. Society, except for her mother's sake, she had never coveted; her conscience was serene; her spirits unbroken. Lady Rosalvan smiled and seemed composed, and Adela was the most enviably cheerful of human beings.

CHAP. XIV.

SYCOPHANCY.

The expected return of Mrs. Cameron was at length announced, in a short note which Lady Rosalvan received from her one morning, just as she was preparing to set out with her daughter, on one of their, now, daily rambles. Of course, such intelligence instantly induced her ladyship to change her purpose; she determined upon remaining at home to welcome her newly-arrived friend; and Adela, no longer scrupulous of leaving her, since she would now have a favourite associate, begged to be accompanied on her meditated walk by her mother's maid.

The attendant whom she had on this occasion solicited, was a tried and faithful creature, valuable for many qualities infinitely superior to her rank and education. She had lived with Lady Rosalvan previous to the birth of Julius or Adela. She knew all the circumstances

that had led to the disunion of Mr. Cleveland and her mistress; and she had been an attentive observer, and was an unaffected reverer of the virtues and character of her late master, Sir Frederic Rosalvan. Adela's deportment towards the domestics, and her unwearied assiduity to her mother, since her abode at Pine Lodge (the name given to her present residence), had won all hearts beneath its roof; but none more warmly than that of Mrs. Temple.

As they proceeded on their walk towards the labourer's cabin which Adela designed to visit, she expressed her satisfaction, after talking some time upon indifferent subjects, at the arrival once again in the neighbourhood, of a friend to whom Lady Rosalvan seemed so much attached, and whom she so exclusively allowed herself to visit—

"I am very anxious," continued she, "to become acquainted with Mrs. Cameron myself, though, by my running away this morning, I have made that matter appear so doubtful. But the truth is, as my mother has never seen her since the death of Sir Frederic, I thought it would be

more considerate, on their first interview, to leave them to themselves."

"Mrs. Cameron," said Mrs. Temple, "saw much less of my dear master than she has always seen of my lady; his loss will, perhaps, be hardly felt by her."

"How then did Sir Frederic dispose of himself? How did he contrive to live under the same roof with my mother, and yet avoid forming any intimacy with the person she best loved and saw almost daily?"

"He was continually engaged, Miss Cleveland, in the performance of active deeds of benevolence, or in innocent study; and he lived and died adored and regretted by every poor family in the neighbourhood!"

The good woman uttered this with so much emotion, that her voice faltered, and tears rushed to her eyes.

"How feelingly you venerate his memory, my worthy Mrs. Temple!" said Adela, taking her hand; "I am sorry thus to have aroused your sensibility; yet it is pleasant to hear the meritorious dead

spoken of with so much attachment and esteem."

"Ah, my good young lady, you have no means of judging how really excellent a character my master's was! You can only think of him as the man who seduced your mother's youth, and has embittered her whole remaining life. As such, he always thought of himself; he condemned, he detested the excesses to which a guilty attachment had betrayed him. Many, when passion had abated, might have done the same; but who like him, when fortune, rank, and accomplishments, promised him a favourable reception again in the world, who would have devoted himself, as he did, to the task of making amends to the lady he had injured? Who would for that lady's sake, have renounced the society of all former friends? have lived shut up seventeen years in a solitude like this, submitting with the patience and sweetness of an angel, sometimes to her reproaches, sometimes to her fits of despair, and yet oftener, I grieve to say it, to her unkindness and injustice! He frequently proposed to her a removal to the Continent; a change of scene to any

part of England or Wales: but she declined these offers, yet railed continually at this place with open detestation. He bore it all without complaining; I believe he regarded it as a part, and a just part, of his merited punishment for having originally misled her. He sought to soothe, to reconcile her to herself, to attach her to the country, and to procure her every simple and rational amusement her situation would admit. But my poor lady owns herself, that she was not reared to love retirement. When ashamed to dwell upon her regret of the world, she fretted after her children—after you, Miss Cleveland, in particular. And to see the anxiety, the tenderness with which my dear master endeavoured to comfort her! to watch the pity with which he looked at, and treated her! oh, it was beautiful! and never shall I reflect upon it with dry eyes, nor without reverence and admiration!"

Adela, whose own starting tears bore testimony to her sympathy in these sentiments, now said—

"You dispose me to honour Sir Frederic almost as highly, Mrs. Temple, as you do

yourself. I have personal reason, indeed, to cherish his remembrance with peculiar gratitude. To his liberality I am indebted for nearly every advantage of education I have received; and to his good taste and enlightened judgment in the recommendation of proper books for my perusal, I owe the love of rational reading which I hope to preserve through life. But still, Mrs. Temple, there is one circumstance for which I feel much perplexed to account, in the little sketch you have given me of the unavailing efforts made by Sir Frederic, to wean my poor mother from languor and dejection. I cannot comprehend, how a man, possessed of such resources of mind, and such affectionate perseverance in so good a cause, should fail to accomplish what, with talents so every way inferior, I have, in a great measure, had the happiness to effect. You must be sensible, that, of late, my mother has shewn infinitely more content, and even animation, than were observable on my first arrival; and let it not be thought vanity, if I ascribe this delightful change, in some degree, to my own representations. Yet, compared to those of

Sir Frederic Rosalvan, how feeble and frivolous must be the powers of reasoning I can boast!"

"I hope I shall not shock your feelings as a good daughter," said Mrs. Temple, "if I venture to confess, Miss Cleveland, that my poor lady never gave to Sir Frederic's arguments a fair and impartial hearing. She could not but be sensible, in her heart, of his good intentions, his wisdom and his kindness; and I make no doubt, that she, in reality, highly respected him. But she ceased to love him almost as soon as, by throwing herself in his power, she had lost her accustomed place in society. I will not describe the vexatious particulars of her conduct towards him; yet certain it is, that she seemed to feel more satisfaction in upbraiding him for the wretchedness of her condition, than she would have found in profiting by his endeavours to relieve it. From you, my dear young lady, she listens to sense and reason with benefit, because she loves the speaker; and because she has no right to tax you with having contributed to her misery; she thought it almost an insult, I believe, to be urged to resigna-

tion by one whom she regarded as the sole author of her disgrace. Poor lady! she never took into the account how much, in the first instance, she had been to blame herself in affording encouragement to Sir Frederic! But, however, by the return of Mrs. Cameron, all your dutiful and virtuous pains, I fear, will be thrown away!"

"Indeed!" cried Adela; "I had hoped, on the contrary, to have found in her an able assistant. Why do you entertain of her such suspicions, Mrs. Temple?"

"Because I know her, ma'am, to be the worst enemy, though under the mask of fondness, that my poor lady has in the world. She is idle, romantic, sentimental, and a dangerous encourager of all her dear friend's *interesting delicacy*, as she calls it; and, at the same time, if I do not greatly wrong her, thoroughly cold-hearted, and alive to nothing so much as the care of her own interest. She has, at different periods, and under different pretences, obtained from my mistress, pretty considerable loans of money; she makes not the smallest conscience of employing my lady's carriage, and her ser-

vants, as if they were her own; and she, and her selfish old Scotch mother, are supplied from our dairy, our kitchen-garden, and our poultry-court, with half the good things they consume. There is no end, in short, of her encroachments, nor are they to be matched by any thing but her abominable and nau eous talent of flattery! The sight of you in this house, my dear Miss Cleveland, and in such high favour too, with my lady, will be very far from a pleasing circumstance to her; but, if I may take the liberty to advise, you have nothing bet er to do, than to steer steadily on in your present course; to give no faith to her professions, (for it is most probable she will try to court you) yet, carefully to avoid offending my lady by shewing your distrust of her friend's good qualities. Accident may, some time or other, open my lady's eyes to the hollowness of this woman's character; but I am sure remonstrance never will."

Here terminated all that was most material of a conversation, which left upon the mind of Adela an impression extremely advantageous of the observing keenness of

Mrs. Temple, but painfully unfavourable of Mrs. Cameron, and by no means so unmixed with blame of Lady Rosalvan as the sincerity of her affection led her to desire. Yet she, as speedily as possible, dismissed every disposition to fruitless censure or unpleasant anticipation; and, with more success than many a philosopher who sets himself professedly to the task, put in practice that happy faculty of her nature which ever allowed her to enjoy present good, without indulging too nice a scrutiny into distant and possible contingencies.

But at the moment of her presentation to Mrs. Cameron, it is natural to suppose that the conversation in which she had so recently been engaged, could not fail to recur forcibly to her mind, and to tinge her manners with a slight degree of reserve, more comfortless to herself, however, than obvious to the beholders; though not wholly unremarked by her mother, who, having said so much to prepossess her in favour of the new-comer, was surprised and disappointed at a coolness, for which she knew no method of accounting. Rendered sensible, by Lady Rosalvan's looks, of the

momentary check which she had given to her satisfaction, Adela exerted herself to dispel from her countenance all traces of its unaccustomed gravity; entered sociably into conversation; omitted no act of attention and good breeding towards their guest—and in less than half an hour, convinced her mother that the formality with which she had entered, either proceeded from shyness, or had been entirely accidental.

Mrs. Cameron dined, and spent the whole day at Pine Lodge, and left it at night in her friend's carriage, with a promise of renewing her visit the day but one following.

Her conversation during the many hours which Adela had passed in her society, was such as, a few instances excepted, she would have pronounced perfectly inoffensive and rational, had no previous warning stimulated her natural sagacity, and rendered her peculiarly observant of the occasional traits of affectation, and exaggerated sensibility which the lady had betrayed. These unwelcome remarks she carefully forbore communicating to her fascinated parent; spoke with deserved praise of Mrs. Cameron's personal appearance and softness of man-

ners, and expressed, as warmly as she could, her readiness to cultivate the acquaintance which had that day been begun.

A very few visits, and a very slight degree of additional observation, unfortunately convinced Adela of the utterly chimerical nature of this too premature declaration. Every succeeding interview alienated her more and more from her mother's ill-selected favourite. Vain, ignorant, and frivolous; a systematic self-indulger, yet a plausible pretender to the most exquisite sympathy in the feelings and happiness of others, she was indefatigable in ringing the changes upon the charms of *unsophisticated tenderness*, of *refined friendship*—of every sentiment, in short, that could be expressed in tinsel and parading terms, such as were most securely calculated to make a sensible, and really warm-hearted being, sick and indignant.

Amongst the various subjects on which, with this false colouring, she delighted to descant, the one which very speedily became to Adela the most oppressive, was the genius, the sweetness of imagination, and the truly poetic fervour of one of her

brothers, whose manuscript compositions in prose and verse, she spent whole evenings in reading to her widely differing auditors. Sonnets, elegies, tales, epigrams; Addresses to a Lady's Broken Fan; Hints for a Tragedy; Essays on Sympathy; Lines on a Tear; Couplets on a Smile; *in*scriptions and *de*scriptions, poured from Mrs. Cameron's inexhaustible port folio with such abundance, and were so lavishly extolled, that she really seemed to believe herself in possession of the fairy power to transform the vilest refuse into some gem of dazzling lustre. But the whole assemblage, endless and diversified as it was, proved to Adela's unvitiated taste, the most surfeiting regale that could have been presented to her; and such as nothing but deference to her mother's known wishes, would have compelled her to sacrifice her time to sit and endure. Extravagantly hyperbolical, and filled with flimsy glitter, she heard not a single production of which the ideas were not hackneyed, the rhyme and measure incorrect, and even the grammar frequently defective. Some amongst them, also, were so extremely amatory, that it amazed her to find them in

a woman's possession, and still more amazed her to hear a woman bestow on them unqualified approbation. To such licentious trash as this, the Novels she had before reprobated, seemed the very essence of wisdom; and there was scarcely a trite or an improbable narrative amongst them that she did not now heartily regret, and, in some measure, even esteem, as possessing the negative merit of intending no harm, although it aimed at no good. Her mortification was increased by the reflection, that whilst all this absurdity was not only tolerated but admired by her mother, the offer of reading to her a page from the Works of Milton, Dryden, or Pope, would have been yawningly rejected!

After considerable doubt and hesitation, Adela, at length, gained courage gently to acknowledge to Lady Rosalvan, her dislike of these fulsome rhapsodies, and to supplicate that she might be spared the obligation of being present at any more such lectures. Her request was granted, and, in outward semblance, at least, forgiven. But, this unfortunate contrariety in their taste, laid the foundation for an increase of

intimacy with Mrs. Cameron, and a jealous apprehension of her daughter's criticising spirit, which no subsequent concessions, on other points, could ever afterwards eradicate. Adela grieved at these symptoms of diminished affection; but she could not, even in her humblest moments, condemn herself for the sincerity which had provoked their appearance; and was persuaded, that whatever might be the rights and privileges of a parent, it was impossible they should be so unlimited as to authorize the contamination of that mental purity which it was every young woman's duty to preserve unblemished. Of Mrs. Cameron, her ill opinion hourly acquired fresh vigour. She saw her artfully fomenting the lurking resentment Lady Rosalvan had conceived against her; she was rendered glaringly sensible of the necessity of being upon terms of privileged favour with her mother, in order to be secure of common civility from her time-serving companion; and so established became their own practice of withdrawing as much as possible from Adela's society, that half the day they spent in Lady Rosalvan's chamber; and the remainder,

she was given to understand, might be at her own disposal, either in the library, or wherever else she chose to order a fire, and enjoy her *sublime speculations.* Bitter were these sarcastic insinuations, and afflicting the unkindness that dictated them to the susceptible heart against which they were levelled! The liberty to employ herself as she would, under any other circumstances, most have wished, granted solely in displeasure, lost its value, and dejected rather than afforded to her any gratification. In this temper of mind, solitude became utterly repugnant to her; yet, had she, even upon their own terms, demanded re-admission to their councils, the time was passed: Lady Rosalvan had learnt to regard her merely as a rigid spy; and Mrs. Cameron, with scarcely dissembled exultation, availed herself of the opportunity to establish her own superior influence, and permanently to destroy that of the daughter whose rivalry had given so much alarm.

It is natural to suppose, that in a predicament so every way unpleasant, Adela could not but be extremely desirous to effect a speedy return to the abode of her unalter-

ably cordial friend, Dr. Hampden. She had the forbearance, however, to make no effort towards the acceleration of that event. She feared to draw forth enquiries which might be unfavourable to her mother; and she considered it as an indispensable duty to silence every murmur, and submit to every discomfort, rather than to make a false representation of her reasons for seeking a removal, or drawing down censure upon Lady Rosalvan by acknowledging the truth.

Wearily and heavily, therefore, now dragged on her hours, each of which, except those devoted to exercise and charitable visits, acquired augmented bitterness from day to day. At her meals only, now, did she ever behold the estranged mistress of the house, or her pernicious confident; and their behaviour towards her evinced increased reserve at every meeting. To judge by their ostentatious display of caution in her presence, it might have been believed that she had expressed her dissent from them in opinion in terms the most arrogant and offensive. Nothing could be further from the truth. Adela had avowed

her sentiments in language peculiarly guarded and delicate; and notwithstanding all that she was condemned to suffer, felt convinced, that, were the deed to perform again, she could find no words more respectful in which to cloath her meaning.

Mrs. Temple, though discouraged by Adela from making any open animadversions on what was passing, had too much shrewdness not to be early struck by the palpable revolution which her lady's sentiments had undergone. A far less degree of discernment than she possessed, would have sufficed to point out the change. It was observable, indeed, to every domestic in the house; yet, did it not, in any one instance, abate their zeal to serve the disgraced favourite, or diminish the respect for her which they all seemed solicitous to evince. An universal detestation of Mrs. Cameron prevailed throughout the establishment, and was often so daringly manifested, that much as Adela valued the general good-will she herself appeared to have gained, her gratification from it, had it been the result of vanity, could not but have received a considerable check, from the

consideration, that most of her own popularity was founded upon a spirit of comparison which delighted to set her up as an idol, in opposition to another whom they chose to stigmatize as a demon.

Happy is it, for beings placed in a state of such insecurity, that time insensibly operates so great a change in their feelings, and is privileged to soften or obliterate so many disappointments. Adela's submission to the galling circumstances of her present situation, at first the mere effect of principle, gradually brought with it the reward of being accompanied by returning cheerfulness, and revived activity of spirit. She ceased not to regret her mother's affection; but she ceased to let that regret prey continually upon her mind, and crush all her faculties. She prescribed for herself a plan of useful reading, and adhered to it with undeviating steadiness; at intervals, she indulged her love of drawing, or amused herself in writing out extracts from fome favourite author. Mrs. Temple also made interest with Lady Rosalvan to procure a person to put the instrument in order; and then she gladly resumed the

long-discontinued habit of devoting some portion of every day to the practice of music. These employments, though they were pursued in solitude, and uncheered by the voice of encouragement, had yet the power to divest her mind of uneasy reflections, and to deprive even winter of its gloom. Her aspect, after a morning so passed, or diversified only by a walk to the adjoining hamlet, was clear and serene; she spoke at the hours of repast, though perhaps scarcely vouchsafed an answer, in the conciliating and unreproachful tone of one, who, if she had offended, was desirous to appease; if she was treated with injustice, was willing not to perceive it. But the subjects of discourses he could safely choose, were few and uninteresting. She dared not allude to any of her own avocations; she was ignorant what those of Lady Rosalvan and her friend had precisely been; she saw within the mansion, none but servants—beyond it, none but peasants. On the weather, therefore; the tardy arrival of the post; the inconveniences attending country walks from bad paths and muddy lanes, or any other inoffensive matter of

fact that occurred, she was reduced to expatiate; wisely, as well as placably considering, that it was better to undergo the imputation of being dull, than to merit that of being sullen.

Three months elapsed with scarcely any variation in this unsocial system, and the middle of February had now arrived. A letter was then delivered to her from her respectable guardian, which caused a sudden and immediate alteration in her position. He wrote to inform her, in terms denoting the highest satisfaction, that his eldest daughter, her friend and favourite correspondent, Ruth, was on the point of being extremely advantageously married. " With every prospect of happiness before her," he added, " she is disturbed and restless in no very reasonable degree, perhaps you will think, at what she terms your untimely absence. Shall I speak the truth? Shall I own, my dear ward, that the perverse little animal has positively declared, that she will submit to put on no fetters till you are present to sanction and countenance the hazardous experiment? We have vainly urged to her your engagement to remain

with Lady Rosalvan till summoned by General Cleveland to pay him the promised visit in London. She reminds us, that the period spoken of is so nearly at hand, that by coming to us immediately, you will only be anticipating your intended departure from Pine Lodge a fortnight or three weeks; and determined, she says, not to forego the privileges attached to this, her short-lived *day of power*, she never suffered me to rest till I had promised to solicit your return; and I greatly fear, will never be brought to reason till you come and preach it to her."

On every possible account, the intelligence contained in this letter, gave to Adela the sincerest and most lively pleasure. Anxious to answer it without unnecessary delay, and persuaded that Lady Rosalvan would, in her heart, rejoice at being emancipated from her company, she ventured, armed with such an excuse, to go up and gently knock at the door of the apartment in which her ladyship now spent all her mornings. No answer being returned, she enquired of a housemaid who was passing, whether Lady Rosalvan was gone out.

"No, ma'am," answered the woman; "she is in the brown room."

This *brown room* (which Adela had always thought admirably denominated) was the dusky den she had imbibed so great a dislike to on her first arrival, but had now believed wholly deserted by the confidential pair, for the advantage of enjoying greater privacy in Lady Rosalvan's chamber. Towards the designated spot, however, she hastily repaired, and omitting, as this was a public sitting-room, the ceremony of giving any signal of her approach, she opened the door and was advancing, when checked by the unexpected sight of a tall well-dressed man, who was standing near the fire, on each side of which, seated in arm-chairs, familiarly conversing with him, appeared Lady Rosalvan and Mrs. Cameron. The former started, and hastily arose on beholding her daughter, who, with equal expedition, effected an immediate retreat, followed, however, and eagerly interrogated by her mother as to the motive which had brought her.

"I came, my dear mother," said Adela,

stopping when she had reached the head of the stairs, "to shew you a letter I have just received from Dr. Hampden. As he requires an answer by return of post, I thought it was right to make the communication with as little loss of time as possible. Will you have the goodness to let me speak with you in the library?"

Lady Rosalvan assented, and they proceeded down the stairs together.

Whatever might have been her ladyship's feelings towards her daughter, previous to this summons, its effect upon her, like that of every forfeited (though, whilst in possession, unvalued) good, to the weak and versatile, was painful in the extreme. The attachment she had so warmly demonstrated during the early part of Adela's visit, seemed now all to revive: she hung round her with tears and caresses; accused herself of unkindness and ingratitude in her conduct towards her; implored her forgiveness, her pity, her affection, in accents of the most touching sorrow; and so completely softened the heart, and reanimated the tenderness of Adela, that the idea of

their approaching separation became nearly as irksome to herself, as it seemed oppressive to her mother.

Mrs. Cameron, suspicious of their long conference, now entered, to ascertain its nature, and, till she heard the undoubted tidings of Adela's recall, and consequent removal, was struck with consternation at sight of the good understanding thus suddenly renewed between them. Her remark, as she quitted the room, much comforted to behold so near a prospect of the departure of this dreaded inmate, was—

"Well, Miss Cleveland, you will, of course, be so much happier with your scientific doctor and his academical sons, that I shall not presume to offer any condolences on your separation from your mother; and still less, on your losing sight of such a poor silly ignoramus as I am! But let me just add, that I think it a thousand pities you cannot be admitted to take a professor's degree in law or divinity yourself!"

This impertinent sarcasm, Adela only answered with a smile, and Mrs. Cameron, failing to provoke a retort, hummed a

tune to disguise her own vexation, and left her at liberty to begin her letter to Dr. Hampden.

At dinner, when the usual trio assembled again, all traces had vanished of the apparition Adela had beheld for a moment in the brown room, nor was his existence, name, or cause of admission, alluded to in the remotest degree. To mere puerile and girlish curiosity she was at all times highly superior: but, where an appearance of mystery attached itself to the conduct of her mother, she felt an anxiety, neither to be repressed by reason, nor blunted by the slightest hope, that a character so facile, swayed by a counsellor so designing, would be proof against the danger of being imposed upon and misguided.

The glow of rekindled affection in Lady Rosalvan, lasted undiminished the two remaining days of her daughter's abode at Pine Lodge. She even had the resolution to insinuate to Mrs. Cameron a wish to be left as much as possible to the uninterrupted enjoyment of the short interval she was now to pass in Adela's society; and

that lady, obliged to take the hint, conferred, at length, upon the being she had so long supplanted, the rare felicity of an exemption from her presence.

It would have been no difficult attempt, Adela believed, to learn from Mrs. Temple who the stranger was, whom she persevered in thinking of with distrust, from the circumstance of having found so much reluctance in the two ladies to speak of him openly. But there was a native sense of delicacy in her character, that forbade her running the risk of communicating to another the suspicions, perhaps unfounded, which she involuntarily entertained herself. With whatever effort, she therefore determined to remain silent.

The moment at length arrived when the mother and daughter were to bid each other farewell. Nothing could exceed the sensibility, the even impassioned fondness of Lady Rosalvan's last embrace; Adela's whole soul was penetrated by it with gratitude and reciprocal affection; they mutually promised to write often, and with all their former unreserve; and then,

painfully disengaging themselves from each other's arms, they suffered Amy's remonstrances to prevail — Adela moved slowly towards the chaise, and Lady Rosalvan retired, weeping, to her own room.

CHAP. XV.

MARRYING.

As a protector during the long journey Adela was now to undertake, Lady Rosalvan had resigned to her the steadiest and most respectable of her male domestics, who rode beside the carriage the whole way, and in every little case of difficulty, was the most rational adviser, and useful assistant. Amy, delighted to have quitted so cheerless a dwelling, was in spirits almost exuberant; and the young traveller also, recovering on the second day of their journey, her own accustomed vivacity, their route was performed with undisturbed comfort; and in health and safety they reached Dr. Hampden's beloved and well-known abode.

Grateful and happy as Adela had ever been beneath this friendly roof, taught now, by the force of contrast, to doubly value the good fortune of possessing such a home, she felt, and looked, and moved, during the first three or four days after her return, as

if she trod on air—as if suddenly transported into the regions of the blessed! Here, though she saw nothing but the plainest sufficiency; no equipage, no men-servants, no elegance of furniture, or costliness of decoration, she found family concord, cheerful activity, order without monotony, love, friendship, and confidence, without romance or affectation. As containing a greater variety of characters, and a larger circle of animated and youthful individuals, it was a happier mansion than even Mrs. Somerville's: with Lady Rosalvan's, it certainly admitted not the remotest comparison; and when Adela's ear caught the sound of an exhilarating laugh, when she gazed at the lively and blooming faces around her; when she watched their diligence in employment, and witnessed the genuine glee with which they enjoyed the simplest amusements, she could not always forbear whispering to herself, with a sigh—"Ah, how unlike to the spirit that animates this charming family, is the afflicting and wretched misanthropy which reigns at Pine Lodge!"

In the destined partner of her guileless

young friend, she was delighted to discover indications of every quality that seemed to prognosticate a happy union. In age he was perfectly assorted to her; his temper appeared cheerful and liberal; he was possessed of an unincumbered, though moderate estate, in her father's neighbourhood; was well educated, well connected, and, above all, evidently attached to her whole deserving family.

A few days previous to the celebration of the important ceremony, Adela, whilst walking with this young man, his bride-elect, and Judith, the second sister, detached herself from the two former, and lingering purposely behind with Judith, seized the opportunity to put some questions to her relative to the only absent individual of the family—

"Where is now your brother William, my dear Judith?" said she; "I miss him more at such a time as this than ever."

"So we all do;" answered Judith, dejectedly; "his presence, my mother says, is the only thing, at such a happy period, wanting to her entire felicity: but, my dear Miss Cleveland, he has been ordered on

foreign service, and how long he may remain abroad, we have not the most distant idea. He sailed in the summer, about a fortnight or three weeks after you went to Mrs. Somerville's; but we did not know positively of his departure till he had been gone nearly a month. A hasty and brief letter, which he had written to us from the place of embarkation, and confided to some careless friend to put into the post, was lost; and we never received a line from him till the first dispatches came over from the army, after it had landed."

"Perhaps," said Adela, "you were all spared much lingering anxiety by this neglect: but I do not mean to defend it; and am certain, that in my own case, it would have made me extremely angry. But tell me, was William well when you *did* hear from him? Was he in spirits, and does he continue fond of his profession?"

"He was perfectly well, and, I hope, has not been tormented by useless repentance: but we often bitterly regret the choice he has made, because it preys so much upon my poor mother's spirits. At times she is really quite miserable. This

impending wedding, however, revives her, and luckily, furnishes her, and, indeed, all of us, with so much to do, that we have no leisure for reflection and sadness. I often think, that but for this unfortunate military passion of William's, and the distressing illnesses of my youngest brother, poor little Benjamin, (for you know, the name of *Hotspur* is now entirely dropped), we should have been *too* happy—almost happier than human creatures, perhaps, have any right to feel."

"My dear Judith," said Adela, smiling; "where did you pick up such miserable doctrine? I should imagine that human creatures have not only a *right to feel* the happiness which Providence bestows upon them, but that, to enjoy without abusing it, and, with a glowing heart to acknowledge the Source whence it is derived, is one of their first, and surely one of their most delightful duties! Dear Judith, strive to bear sorrow, when it comes, with patient resignation; but never aim at receiving happiness with distrustful melancholy! But now let me hear what you know relating to our old friend Algernon. Has he written lately? Have you the least idea where he is, and how he is going on?"

"We have had no satisfactory intelligence about him a great while. The last time my father heard from him, he spoke of a journey he meditated, to see his lady, who was at Cheltenham with her mother, and very ill. I begin to think his married life has not been happy. He has never written in good spirits since the first year the connection was formed; and, indeed, has written as seldom as possible. William saw him once in town, and told us, that nothing could exceed the kindness of his reception; but that he was not pressed to take up his abode at Algernon's house, as he had been, so cordially, soon after the marriage; and further, he said, that there seemed to reign a species of discomfort throughout the whole mansion, which communicated itself to his own feelings, and he was glad to get away."

"Did he see Mrs. Mordington during this visit?" enquired Adela.

"Yes; she and her husband were together when he was introduced. He thought her very handsome, but owns, that she did not look at all good-tempered, and was barely civil to him. As he was going down

stairs, he met Algernon's two children, a little boy and girl, who are twins. William stopped them a moment, feeling interested about them for his friend's sake, and kissed them; and the only smile he saw upon Algernon's face the whole time he was in the house, was called forth by the gratification he received from my brother's notice of these little creatures."

"How melancholy are all these particulars!" sorrowfully observed Adela; "poor Algernon! He merited a happier lot!—But why, why did he so precipitately marry? And how came he to be so deceived in the character of the young lady he chose? He had often resided in the same house with her; she was his cousin, and had been the companion of his sister from her childhood. How was it possible then, he should be so ignorant of her real disposition?"

"My father," resumed the half-laughing Judith, "scruples not to say, she must be an artful Jezabel! Yet he allows that no great depth of cunning might be requisite to impose upon one so young and inexperienced as Algernon was at the time he contracted this alliance; and he says, that

when we recollect how extremely frank and unguarded he ever was himself, and how reluctant to harbour suspicions of the sincerity of others, we may easily account for his having been the dupe of a beautiful girl, who, not only to please herself, but to comply with the views of her father, took all the pains she could, to captivate and ensnare him. As for Miss Eudocia Mordington, Algernon's sister, I dare say she was afraid to speak: only think how her interference would have offended the whole family!"

On alluding again to this painful subject in the evening, when they were all assembled at tea, Adela was informed by Reuben Hampden, who, according to his wonted custom, had been at S—— in the morning to read the newspaper, that he had seen a paragraph relating to Algernon, which, but for her recalling the circumstance to his mind, he should perhaps have forgotten to mention.

"Yet, not," continued he, "from indifference to what concerns Mordington, but from the variety of other intelligence I read afterwards, which drove this out of my head. It is stated, then, that his uncle,

Lord Ossely, as we have always called him, is dead; but that a few weeks previous to this event, he had succeeded to a higher title, and that this title, which, to say the truth, is completely gone out of my recollection, has now descended to Algernon, with the estates attached to it, and the whole of his late uncle's personal property, except the portion he has left his daughter, and the jointure settled on his widow."

Reuben was severely lectured by his sisters and Adela for having so speedily suffered the new appellation by which they were to know their friend, to escape his memory; and he promised, if he did not again forget it, to look back at the paper the next day, and bring them home a more perfect account.

"But how is it," said Dr. Hampden, "that only *one* of the late Viscount's daughters is mentioned? He certainly had *two*. Reuben, are you quite sure that your memory, in this point also, has not been a little treacherous?"

"Oh, here I am perfectly correct, sir; for I remember being struck by the omission myself; and it led me to conclude, that the

illness of Mordington's wife, which we heard of last summer, had terminated fatally."

"Well, if it is so," cried Mrs. Hampden, "I hope there is no great wickedness in saying, that such a sort of body is as well out of the world as in it! On my conscience, I believe, she was only a plague to her husband, and an evil example to all who approached her!"

"My dear," said the doctor, "this is not spoken with your usual sense of charity! You forget that this poor young woman, of whom, after all, we know no positive harm, has left behind her two helpless little children, whose father, scarcely yet six and twenty, must be wholly unfit to supply to them a mother's place."

"I had, indeed, forgotten these poor infants," cried Mrs. Hampden, "and I am ashamed of myself for having spoken so unfeelingly. Let us, however, hope, that the little innocents will find friends amongst their mother's female relations. Lady Ossely will perhaps take charge of them; she has reared and protected Algernon's sister, who, I always understood, was perfectly happy with her."

Three days after this conversation, which, during an interval of so much joyful though anxious bustle, was not renewed, the momentous solemnity took place that transplanted Ruth into a different family, and imposed upon her such new and important duties. To the friends and connections of a bridal pair, the wedding day is seldom one of unclouded contentment: the fairest hopes may be entertained, and the brightest prospects may, afar off, be discerned; yet, a doubting, trembling emotion fills the bosom of the parents; mingles itself with their most complacent feelings, and casts over that awful day, a pensive seriousness but too nearly allied to melancholy.

"The Lord be good unto me!" ejaculated Mrs. Hampden, as she sat after dinner, trying to wink away her tears; "Who would ever suppose, were they to see us all looking so blank at each other, that this was my precious Ruth's wedding-day! I had no notion I should feel so mopish and so dull after an event I have been long so

earnestly desiring. I wonder, my dear," addressing the doctor, "whether my poor blessed father and mother were in this way when *I* was married!"

"No, to be sure, my dear!" answered the doctor, affecting more gaiety than he really felt; "they were too well pleased at your good luck in getting so incomparable a husband! And I'll tell you another thing that helped them to keep off what you call mopishness: they drank frequently, as you and I are now going to do ourselves, to the health of the new married couple, and thereby drowned all dull reflections in clear port. Come, goody, give me your glass; and let me likewise fill all yours, my pretty April-faced lasses. Hang it! what should you girls look so scared about? It will be time enough to take fright when your own turn comes. And, so, here's my hearty love to you, and may that hour speedily arrive! I promise you, I shall be as glad to look grave, and feel a little queer after your wedding, Adela, or yours, Judith, as after our dear Ruth's."

CHAP. XVI.

PROTECTION.

SCARCELY had the family at Dr. Hampden's recovered from the mixed impression of seriousness and pleasure which the recent event had occasioned, and returned calmly to their usual habits of life, when Adela received the following letter from her brother.

"Dear Adela, *Bath, March* 16.

"YOU will see by the date of this, where I now am. I hate the place abominably: but my father was ordered to it about a month since—I was wise enough to believe, because his London physicians did not know what else to do with him. However, now they hear he is laid up with the gout, they say that is just what they wanted; and they plume themselves prodigiously upon their foresight and sagacity in sending

him hither to be martyred. The fact is, to do these tormentors justice, that, though lame as possible, he is, upon the whole, wonderfully better than on his first arrival. But this is not what I meant principally to talk to you about; at the same time that I know, if you are as pious a dutiful little soul as you used to be, you can never have too many of these amusing details. Now don't look shocked! I assure you I have been very sorry for the poor patient; and when he was at the worst, I took great care of him, and sat by him with almost as pitiful a face as you could have worn yourself: and whenever the twinges in his toe were sharper than usual, I used to feel *half* tempted to forswear good eating and drinking myself, for fear of the stinging reckoning I might one day have to pay. But, luckily, these little retributions seldom fall upon a man till he is turned of forty; and between one and twenty and forty, there are some pleasant years, it would not altogether be so delectable to spend in premature mortification and penance. I can live upon roots, and sip 'pure element' at any time. In return for this little specimen of

epicurean philosophy, you may, if it will amuse you, assume the stoic; preach temperance and self-denial, and interdict me half the enjoyments of life:—*A vous très permis.*

"But now to business.—You remember, no doubt, that you are invited to spend a month or two this spring at our uncle's, General Cleveland's? I can hardly suspect you of having forgotten a circumstance which must be so important to a girl of eighteen or nineteen—which are you?—as a first journey to London. Well, the General is here now on a visit to my father; but he returns to town next week. He has talked to me about the properest mode of bringing you up from Devonshire, and says, that when once arrived at this place, you should travel the remainder of the way to London with him. I have no objection to a little change of scene, and therefore told him, that I would undertake to fetch you to Bath, and be answerable for placing you safely in his care. Use dispatch, therefore, my dear girl, in getting ready to set out with me next Wednesday. I shall be at the good old *physic-shop* on Tuesday night; and,

perhaps, if I behave myself in an orderly, discreet manner, they will give me a bed. Pray prepare honest Blacky to attend you: my father is as willing to pay her wages in London as any where else; and I informed the General, that he must by no means expect to behold your fair person without its dingy, but perpetual shadow. I should hardly think I had imported more than half of you to Bath, if I saw you there without the lovely Amy.

"My father, you may discover by what I have said above, is aware of this meditated excursion to town, and tacitly, at least, sanctions it. The General was so bent upon carrying his point, that, without saying more than is consistent with his habitual reserve, my father could not well oppose it. I cannot promise that he will see you when you arrive. It is a stipulated thing that you are to be set down at the General's lodgings. But, my good little sister, don't be discouraged; remember the old saying, 'Rome was not built in a day:' it *was* built, however, at last; and my father's prejudices, which, we must allow, have taken a good long day to gather strength, may likewise

at last, be rooted up!—The simile is a vile one; but I have not time to think of a better.—So, adieu, till you, and I, and Blacky meet.

"Your affectionate brother,

"JULIUS CLEVELAND."

Between the reception of this letter and the arrival at S—— of its precipitate writer, only one day intervened, which was necessarily spent by Adela in all the hurry attendant upon a sudden removal, and an unforeseen obligation to engage in the disagreeable labour of packing up. Judith and Amy were her willing assistants, and some hours before Julius drove to the door, her preparations were completed, and she had full leisure to reflect upon the new prospect opening before her.

That Mrs. Somerville should be absent from town at a time when her assured support would have been, to the uninitiated Adela, of such peculiar importance, was a matter of serious but hopeless regret. General Cleveland, it is true, she had formed an acquaintance with the preceding year at Rosedown Court, and had every reason, from the kindness of his conduct

towards her on that occasion, to expect from him, in his own house, the utmost attention and indulgence. But to her aunt she was a total stranger; and the sarcastic observations which, from time to time, she had heard Julius utter respecting her, had by no means inclined her to place any dependance upon her cordiality or regard. Barbara Cleveland, their eldest daughter, she had never seen since the summer they had resided together some weeks in Northumberland. Adela, however, felt tolerably assured, that such as Barbara then was, such she would unalterably remain to her life's end;—a little consequential pretender to information, who, at fifty, would scarcely be more decisive in her opinions, or less attractive in her person, than at fifteen. Of the two remaining sisters, she only knew by report, that one was in her own family considered as a beauty; and that the other was kept back as still a child. Talbot Cleveland, their brother, she was well convinced, would be her steady friend; and, indeed, towards him she always mentally turned with expectations of meeting more invariable kindness than from any one else

in the family. At all events, Adela, who constantly endeavoured, where a change of circumstances might be considered in two points of view, to fix her eye on its brightest side, cheered her doubting spirit with the reflection, that though perhaps unpleasant, her abode at General Cleveland's need not be long; since Mrs. Somerville had engaged, the moment she reached town, to claim her as her promised guest for the remainder of the season.

The expected approach of Julius, whose rapid progress, in so still a place, was heard from afar, and provoked every cur in the neighbourhood to rush forth and pursue his chaise with clamorous barkings, first put an end to the ruminations of his sister, and sent her affectionately to the garden-gate to meet and welcome him. He kissed her with his usual appearance of careless kindness; told her that he was as hungry as a hunter, and whistling to a large terrier, his travelling companion, begged leave to introduce him to her, by the inviting name of Wasp.

"I assure you," added he, "Wasp is a very fine fellow, and the best hand at

hunting down a sleek tabby cat that ever I met with. Come, pat him, Adela; he won't hunt *you!* What's the girl afraid of? He'll not take you for a tabby these dozen years!"

"And luckily," said Adela, "if he really is such an enemy to the harmless race of cats, there are none here he can exercise his ingenuity in tormenting."

"Ah, my poor Adela, this tenderness for the cat tribe is prodigiously ominous! It is high time you should get to London, or we should have you rusticating into as complete a starched, prim spinster, as ever sat by the fire, rivaling the mouser at her elbow, and blinking, purring, and dozing through a life of solitary insignificance."

Having now reached the end of the gravel walk leading towards the house, Julius suddenly stopped, and said—

"How must I accost Dr. Sangrado? If I look very solemn and formal, he'll perhaps insist upon treating me like a man afflicted with hypochondria; if I am too frisky, he'll swear I'm mad! How shall I steer safely between these two perils?"

"Why, if he affirms insanity to be your

case, I will assure him, that you have gone about the world so long with the same symptoms, yet never, to my knowledge, done *much* mischief, that you may as well be trusted a little longer."

Notwithstanding the cavalier tone in which Julius, he scarcely knew why, had always delighted to speak of Dr. Hampden, the manner in which he addressed him, when, at length, introduced, was divested of all presumption, and unaffectedly respectful. Adela, on beholding him appear to such advantage, felt proud of bearing to him so near an affinity. She looked at him, now the light enabled her to distinguish the improvement in his height and figure since their last meeting, with pleased surprise. On his countenance and whole person was visibly impressed the character of a gentleman—the grace and ease of one early accustomed to the best society. His features, strongly resembling her own, but more marked, were handsome without effeminacy, and regular without being formal. Nothing could be more delightful than the expression of his eyes, when lighted up with gaiety and good-

humour; but he *could*, and, too often, did allow them to assume an air of haughtiness and defiance, which, added to their naturàl brilliancy, rendered them almost too fierce to look at. Adela had never, since his childhood, seen him delivered up to any uncontroulable bursts of passion: but she knew he was irritable; and from motives of affection as well as of prudence, carefully avoided the slightest risk of awakening the ‘ slumbering dragon.’

The evening passed in lively and social conversation; the Hampdens were infinitely pleased with their new guest; Julius appeared well satisfied with his own powers of recommending himself to favour, and all parties expressed regret when the hour for retiring arrived.

After an early breakfast, the following morning, the youthful travellers set forward on their journey, accompanied by the kindest good-wishes of those they quitted, and whom they were so wholly uncertain when they might see again.

As Amy occupied a seat in their chaise, they both abstained from talking of family affairs whilst on the road: but at the inn

where they stopped to dine, Julius was very inquisitive on the subject of Adela's recent visit to their mother. She spoke of it in as favourable terms as truth would permit; avoiding all details, and softening whatever she could not wholly suppress. Yet her account, modified and cautious as it was, gave him great displeasure. He execrated Mrs. Cameron, calling her a crafty parasite; vowed that Adela should never enter Pine Lodge again whilst that woman's presence was tolerated within its walls; and, in short, talked himself into such a passion, that it became difficult, either by persuasion or argument, to induce him to change the subject. But Adela had her interrogations to make as well as Julius; and was much more eager to hear some particulars of the household to which she was repairing, than to listen longer to his useless ravings against that from which she was lately returned.

In answer to the questions she addressed to him respecting their aunt—

"Pooh, nonsense!" ejaculated he, "Why do you plague yourself or me with enquiries about that woman? Hav'n't you

found out by this time, from all you have heard at Rosedown, that she is not the sort of person you'll ever like? But what is that to the purpose? you will be my uncle's guest more than hers. She will hardly be grossly uncivil to you; she will be obliged to take you about to fashionable houses; she will make you a very creditable chaperon; and what else have you to care for? You must not expect, wherever you go, to meet with people you can make sentimental friends of!—As for her two girls, one of them, the amiable Barbara, you already know; the other, set off by such a foil, is passably good-looking: but, like the owl's children in the fable, all my aunt's progeny are considered as paragons, either mental or personal; all, indeed, except the third daughter, poor little Christiana, the best of the whole female race. Talbot I shall say nothing about; you cannot fail to remember him.—But, by the way, I must give you one caution relating to him. Do not encourage him to be too attentive to you: the old lady will hate you in complete earnest, if she sees any thing of that sort; and even the assiduities of a pleasant young man will

hardly compensate the discomfort of being constantly eyed with malignity by the mother with whom he resides."

"I am no coquette, my dear Julius, be assured, and have not the smallest desire to engross an undue share of Talbot's attention; but I should feel sorry to be compelled to treat him with disobliging and unfriendly reserve."

"Well, manage as well as you can: but depend upon it, that if you turn his head, the old lady will turn you into stone by the potency of her own gorgon looks. She has set her heart upon marrying him to some dowdy of quality: whether the precise individual is yet singled out, or remains to be pitched upon, I neither know, nor, to say the truth, do I much care: but I am well assured that this is her darling project; and I have seen upon more occasions than one, when Talbot has been holding forth in your praise, that the lofty severity of her accustomed aspect has assumed tenfold greater majesty, and the sublime terrors of her brow have heightened into tenfold more portentous awe."

On their arrival at Bath, which, under

any other circumstances, Adela would have been so alive to the pleasure of beholding for the first time, the painful reflection, that though actually in the very city which contained her father, she was denied admission to him, filled her mind with sadness. She looked anxiously from side to side of the streets through which they drove, supplicating Julius, if they passed the house their father occupied, to point it out to her. At the moment she made this request, they were proceeding through Milsom Street, and at the open door of one of its handsomest dwellings, stood a servant out of livery, whom, when her brother perceived, he said—

"That's my father's valet, and that is the mansion that has the honour to contain my father himself."

"Oh, speak to the man, dear Julius! Ask him how my father has been during your absence;—I should so like to become acquainted with the face of any one who lives in that house!"

"You are a goose for your pains, my good little sister, for this fellow's is the

ugliest face you ever beheld!—But here he comes, post haste, to speak to *me*."

Then, letting down the side glass—"Well, Mr. Gerard," added Julius, "what's the news with you? How are you going on here?"

"Charmingly, sir; my master has been out to-day, taking a little airing; and bore it vastly well.—But, sir, I have a message to you from your uncle; he was obliged this morning, suddenly to set off for London."

"The d—l he was!" impatiently interrupted Julius, "and what was the mighty obligation that compelled him to use such extraordinary speed?"

"I really don't know, sir; but he left word with me, that his lodging was not discharged, and that Miss Cleveland would find herself perfectly well accommodated in it, till you were at leisure to conduct her safely to town."

"Humph! A very easy way of arranging the business! Upon my honour," continued Julius, drawing his head back into the chaise; "these are tricks, which, in

the father of a family, are rather too young! I don't half like carrying you, Adela, to inhabit a lodging by yourself. My uncle ought to have known better than to have exposed you to so disagreeable a necessity. I wish I could take you in *there*," looking towards his father's house; "but that I must *not* do: therefore, let us make the best of an unavoidable evil, and drive quietly to these foresaid delectable lodgings. They are only at the end of the street; and as soon as I have seen my father, after setting you down, I'll come back and spend the evening with you."

Adela, silently, but gratefully thanked her brother, by a cordial pressure of the hand; and on his making a signal to the postillion, they once more proceeded.

Her reception by the mistress of the house, where she was now to take up her temporary abode, was sufficiently respectful; and Julius having seen her safely established in his uncle's late drawing-room, and recommended to her, as there were other tenants in the house, to be as seldom visible upon the stairs as possible, consigned her

to the care of Amy, and ran off to pay a visit to his father.

In less than half an hour, he made his re-appearance—

"Well, Adela," cried he, entering with a look that proclaimed good tidings; "I have succeeded in effecting a change in our domestic counsels, which I think you will approve. My father consents to your taking possession of the room I lately inhabited in his house; and as he and his people occupy all the others that are fit for immediate use, I shall remove hither, and avail myself of the 'perfect accommodations' my uncle thought proper to recommend so warmly to your favour."

"Dearest Julius," cried Adela, fluttered and changing colour; "shall I see my father?"

"Not to-night, certainly: but you will be in a place of security and credit. Come, take hold of my arm, and let us set off directly. Amy may follow us, and I will send somebody to fetch your baggage."

On reaching the house of Mr. Cleveland, every face which Adela beheld in her way

to the apartment now destined to receive her, wore an air of respectful congratulation that indicated the pleasure with which they, at length, welcomed the daughter of their master to her proper home.

"Here," said Julius, throwing open the door of a spacious bed-chamber, "is your allotted resting place. I am sorry to tell you, it is the only part of the house to which I am permitted to introduce you. But never mind; you shall not live in such vile durance, longer than I can help. To-morrow, or the next day at furthest, I will set out with you for London. Meanwhile, in the adjoining dressing closet, you will find two or three shelves with books; you shall have an excellent supper to-night, of which I invite myself to partake; and if I am unable to travel with you to town as soon as I mentioned, I will, at least, escort you about the city of Bath in the morning, and shew you all that is most worth seeing of a place which you must certainly feel some curiosity to become better acquainted with."

"A million of thanks, my dearest Julius," cried Adela, "for all these truly

brotherly and kind attentions! What should I have done but for your support? But if you think that my father requires your presence, leave me now; and be assured, you leave me perfectly reconciled to this seclusion. I have no wish to force myself into my father's sight; yet tell him, if it is not improper again to mention my name to him, how deeply sensible I am of his goodness in permitting me to remove hither from those solitary lodgings."

"By the time I get down to him," said Julius, "he will be preparing to go to bed; so I shall have no opportunity of repeating these fine things, and shall only stay to bid him good night. In the morning, perhaps, I may be better able to make speeches for you; and if a fair occasion offers itself, I will endeavour to be as eloquent, as if you stood by to suggest to me, in a whisper, all I should say."

CHAP. XVII.

ACCOMMODATION.

In profound seclusion, except during the hours when Julius, according to his promise, accompanied her in rambles through the town and its environs, Adela spent two entire days at her father's. On the morning of the third, Julius informed her, whilst she was at breakfast, that a chaise would be at the door in less than an hour, in which he intended, without further delay, to set out with her for London.

"And, must I, then," said she, mournfully, "inevitably depart without beholding my father?"

"Even so, my poor Adela: but now pray do not vex yourself unreasonably about it. He has got some confounded notion, that you are extremely like Lady Rosalvan; and he takes it into his head, that the sight

of you would shatter his nerves, and perhaps occasion a relapse! Gerard, however, has ventured to assure him, that you bear much more resemblance to the paternal side of your family than to the maternal. But I will let you into a secret.—This deuced fit of the gout has pulled him down abominably; and, besides, he is still obliged to keep one foot wrapped up in flannels, and to submit, whenever he attempts to walk, to the ceremony of using a crutch. Now, you are to know, that these are little humiliations, which it would extremely disconcert him to expose to your observation. My father has been one of the handsomest men of his day, and he can by no means reconcile himself to the idea of being seen, for the first time, by a fine blooming girl, though that girl is his daughter, in the character of a poor broken-down invalid. You shake your head, and look incredulous! Why, you don't suppose, my dear child, that all personal vanity is confined to your own sex? A man accustomed to admiration, is as unwilling to forego its refreshing incense as a first-rate female beauty. My father and uncle are both notable instances of the

truth of this assertion. They are bucks and beaux of a generation now beginning to wax a little ancient; and have, undeniably, somewhat outlived their claims to high distinction on the score of exterior attractions: but the crows-feet of encroaching age are obstinately winked at by themselves; and, to others, they trust, remain wholly imperceptible. However, being a little suspicious, that the inroads of these spoilers, may, at nearly fifty, require some coaxing to escape detection, they systematically exclude from their presence all observers, whenever illness forces them to omit any of the customary duties of the toilet."

Adela, who well knew, that in what Julius had been stating respecting the General, there was very little exaggeration, felt somewhat apprehensive that there might be but too much foundation for ascribing the same weakness to her father. She abstained, therefore, from making any comment upon what she had heard; entertaining no sort of inclination to listen to a detail of circumstances in support of such assertions. Indeed, she could not but se-

cretly wonder, that a son, professing to be upon good terms with his father, could endure, so unnecessarily, to proclaim that father's infirmities. A longer intimacy with Julius, and a fuller acquaintance with his character, gradually removed from her all temptation to persevere in wondering at these instances of levity and indiscretion. She found him, in essential points, disposed to perform his duty, and capable of well-principled and honourable conduct; but, in delicacy or forbearance respecting the prejudices or sensibility of others, he was utterly deficient: and not only towards indifferent persons was he thus callous, but, from the evil habits fostered by an erroneous mode of education, an equal degree of hardness of heart extended itself towards his most intimate friends, his nearest connections, and even the parent whose mistaken indulgence had accustomed him to respect no other feelings than his own.

The journey from Bath to London, was performed with all the celerity that usually attends the journeys of the wealthy and the idle, who, from mere dearth of real business,

find amusement in making a business of a pleasure, and fancy themselves hurried because they are impatient, and entitled to the promptest obedience at every inn, because an air of leisure and tranquillity would deduct from their consequence.

When they arrived at General Cleveland's door, the evening was already far advanced; yet Julius, well acquainted with the late hours to which his uncle's family was accustomed, assured Adela, that she would be in excellent time for Mrs. Cleveland's dinner. Then, shaking hands with her, as she descended from the carriage, he said he should not alight himself, as he was in haste to get to his father's house, and change his dress.

"And besides," added he, "I feel half inclined to quarrel with our frisky uncle for decamping so cavalierly from Bath; and, very possibly, were we now to meet, might not have the resolution to resist giving way to the unseemly propensity. So, go in by yourself. I will call upon you in the morning, and shall expect to hear a particular account of your reception. Meanwhile, good night; take care of yourself, and be sure you don't behave like a little

sneak, and suffer yourself to be browbeaten by any of the old lady's insolent airs of mock-dignity!"

Her baggage being by this time removed from the chaise, and Adela admitted into the house, he drove rapidly away.

Left, now, surrounded by strange servants, in a spacious hall, unknowing which way to proceed, she addressed the most respectable in appearance amongst the group, and desired to be conducted to her uncle.

"The General is not at home, ma'am," answered the man.

A young voice was at that moment heard from the head of the drawing-room stairs, enquiring in an eager sort of loud whisper,

"Is that Miss Cleveland?"

Adela raised her eyes, and beheld, leaning over the banisters, a girl of about fourteen or fifteen years of age, very brown, and not extremely unlike a little old fairy; but whose eyes were full of vivacity and intelligence, and, who, the instant her question was answered in the affirmative, skipped nimbly down the stairs, saying—

"Come up into the drawing-room, Miss Cleveland; there's nobody there, for mamma

and my sisters are out; but I have had a foreboding all day, that you would be here in the evening. Do come up, and one of the men will shew your maid into the housekeeper's room."

Adela, concluding this cordial little personage was her uncle's third daughter, Christina Cleveland, very readily consented to follow her: but, as they ascended the stairs, she was startled by a loud chorus of laughter proceeding from a room which, by its situation, she conjectured to be the dining parlour.

"Is there company in the house?" enquired she.

"Yes; a party of gentlemen dined here: but papa left them to the care of my brother Talbot about an hour ago, and went to give all the support he could to a new play, written by somebody he knows, and performed to-night for the first time."

Whilst the little girl was still speaking, she and Adela reached the drawing-room, which, to the latter's great comfort, the evening being chill and damp, was cheered by an excellent fire.

"Will you have any tea or coffee?" demanded her hospitable little friend—"You look fatigued, and I am sure it would do you good."

Adela, finding that the day was further advanced than her brother had suspected, and hopeless of obtaining more substantial refreshment, gladly accepted the considerate proposal of her youthful entertainer; who, after ringing the bell, turned hastily round, and said—

"Do you know, Miss Cleveland, that your carriage, when I heard it stop, put me into a terrible fright?—Who do you imagine I took you for?"

"For something more tremendous than you now, I hope, are disposed to think me," answered Adela, much amused by the originality of her look and manner.

"Oh, a great deal more so, I assure you! For I suspected you to be a new tormentor in the shape of a tall, rawboned French woman, who is engaged as my governess, and has been expected from the country these three days. Had it been her, I should have run off to bed; indeed, I ought by this

time to have been snugly tucked up for the night; but mamma's maid, who generally undresses me, went out the instant her mistress's carriage drove from the door; and for any of the Bettys and Mollys who remain, I don't care a pin: they have no authority to make me do what I don't like."

The appearance of a footman, bringing in a solitary cup of cold, but immensely strong tea, interrupted Christina's loquacity. Adela surveyed her black potion with some dismay: but hoping to render it more palatable than it looked, by the insertion of an unusual quantity of cream and sugar, she placed it upon a table near her, and begged the man not to wait.

As soon as he was gone—

"To-morrow, said Christina," if that odious Mademoiselle Durocher is not come, I will bring into your room, the moment I am dressed, my youngest sister, dear little Laura. She is only three years old, and the loveliest child you ever beheld. I declare, I think she is a good deal like you, only she has different coloured eyes. I wish you could have seen her to-night, for I am sure you will doat upon her."

" And upon you too!" said Adela, kindly taking her hand — " You are a warm-hearted, and dear little girl!"

" How very good of you to say so! I assure you I am no favourite with any body in the house, except with Laura and papa."

" I can hardly pity you if you are secure of the affection of your father!" said Adela, mentally reverting to her own case.

" Oh, yes; papa is very good-natured to me, and when I can make him laugh, will do any thing in the world I ask. Mamma, however, says my jokes are plebeian: yet, she allows, sometimes, that they *are* jokes, and smiles a little whether she will or no. My eldest sister, Barbara, is too anxious to be thought a wit herself, to relish any body's *bon-mots* but her own; and for a very good reason, as I once heard cousin Julius say. She is, you know, like myself, as sallow as a gipsy, and not much higher than a walking-stick; but being determined to acquire some celebrity, she sets up for a miracle of accomplishments and science, and hates all rivals in knowledge, worse even than she hates a beauty; for she knows, that with a beauty she cannot possibly enter into com-

petition, and, therefore, affects to despise so paltry an advantage."

"I am afraid, however," said Adela, smiling, "she will soon have a formidable rival, even at her own weapons, in you."

"Oh no; before I am old enough to be presented (for mamma says, I shall not go out with her till I am twenty, unless either of my sisters marry), she will be established in some other family, or settled into a confirmed old maid, and all her pretensions will be over. But, mercy upon me! don't I hear another carriage at the door? Oh, it must be my gaunt enemy, this time! It sounds exactly like a hackney coach; and, I suppose, has conveyed her terrific person hither from the inn at which she disembarked! Well, good night, dear Miss Cleveland; I am off! they won't bring her in here, if I decamp—good night. Papa will be at home by eleven o'clock; but if you are tired, go to bed."

She then scampered away, leaving Adela, half in doubt, whether most to love her frankness and good-humour, or to wonder at her ceaseless prattle and unrestrained communicativeness.

Finding the potent beverage which had been brought to her too nauseous for drinking, she took up a volume of tales from a circulating-library, and began reading; at times, however, disturbed by the peals of laughter issuing from the eating-room, and somewhat surprised at such loud revelry in a private house.

In about a quarter of an hour, Christina once more put her comic little face in at the door, and leaving it half open as she advanced, said—

"I have had a peep at the disguised grenadier, as they shewed her to her room! She is taller than ever, and, with the weight of a single finger, were she to apply it, might crush my whole diminutive body! Lord bless me, what shall I do with her? If Jemima had not got out of a governess's hands, she would soon have wheedled mamma into parting with her, as she has formerly done with so many others: but I have not the smallest chance of procuring her dismission without an assistant."

"Then, my dear little cousin," said Adela, "would it not be good policy to restrain this violence of antipathy till you know whether

she deserves it? A gaunt look is not always a proof of a ruthless disposition; and this poor lady, notwithstanding her patagonian stature, may be found, upon acquaintance, very gentle and civilized."

"Such a miracle is just possible, I allow; but, in return, you must also allow, that it is *not* possible a dwarf should live with a giant without being overawed. She may forbear, perhaps, to shake me to a jelly every time I affront her: but I shall know she has the power—and hate her accordingly!"

At that moment, the dining-parlour door was hastily opened, and, the next, a gentleman's voice reached Adela's ear from the hall, saying to one of his companions,

"In the D—l's name, Talbot, whose great trunk is this, against which I have almost broken my leg?"

"I know nothing of the matter. But the direction will tell. Read it, Sir Patrick."

For Mademoiselle Durocher, at General Cleveland's, Berkeley-Square. "And who is Mademoiselle Durocher?"

"A French governess, I believe, newly imported for my sister Christina."

"Confound her huge trunk! What the deuce business has a French governess with so enormous a receptacle for her rouge and her fly-caps?"

Other voices were now heard in tumultuous parley, as if the whole party was breaking up, and presently, Adela distinguished the nasal tone of him she had heard addressed as Sir Patrick, saying—

"Stop for me one moment, whilst I go up into the drawing-room to look for that pamphlet the General wished me to take home. I shall find it quicker than I can direct a servant where to seek it."

And with a deliberate step, that announced none of the flightiness of youth, he began ascending the stairs.

Adela looked around for some means of absconding, and was hastening towards a folding-door that led into the adjoining room, when Christina, darting forward, turned the key in the lock, drew it out, and laughingly said—

"Oh, you shall not escape so easily, I promise you! Why, it's only mamma's old cousin, Sir Patrick Harley. He's a great

admirer of the ladies, and as rich as a Jew. Try and make a conquest of him."

Adela had no time to remonstrate; for before this speech was quite ended, the portly Baronet who was its subject, breathing short, from the effort of mounting the stairs, abruptly entered.

If the sight of his youthful cousin, still up at so unusual an hour, surprised him, the appearance of an utter stranger, whose face and figure were so striking, astonished him yet more. He bowed, however; made a slight apology for his intrusion, and approaching one of the pier-tables, took from it a pamphlet, and was moving back towards the door. But Christina ran after him, and catching hold of his arm, said in a low voice—

"Well, Sir Patrick—how do you like her?"

"Like her?" replied he, in the same tone —"Why, who is she?"

"Dear, can't you guess, then?—She is my new governess! The lady you have been accusing of wearing rouge, and so ungallantly exclaiming against because of a little bruise upon the shin! Don't you feel more

forgivingly disposed now you have seen her?"

"Indeed I do!—She's a most beautiful creature. But, my dear little coz, I fear you will soon plague her either into a consumption, or into another family!"

"Oh, no; I mean to behave surprisingly well to her, for she has quite won my heart. Take care she does not win *yours*, Sir Patrick; if you look at her with so much attention, I shall begin to tremble for you!"

Here, a loud and impatient voice from the hall was heard calling out—

"Sir Patrick, we are off this moment, if you don't come down!"

Thus hurried, the Baronet with some discomposure, quickened his steps, and rejoining his companions, the whole party in a few minutes left the house.

"Did you hear, Miss Cleveland, what I said about you to poor Sir Pat?" enquired Christina, as soon as he was gone.

"Not very distinctly: but I suspect you have led him into some error."

"He has departed under the firm persuasion that you are the divine Durocher! How I should enjoy, were it practicable, to

put the same imposition upon my brother. But he will recollect you, of course, the moment he sees you, though, I believe, it is four years since he beheld you last. He has always spoken of you with prodigious admiration, and if he had suspected you were actually in the house, nothing in the world would have induced him to go out."

Just then, the door was again suddenly opened, and a woman very showily dressed, but of a vulgar and insolent demeanour, bounced into the room, and totally regardless of the presenee of Adela, rudely seized her young companion by the arm, saying:

"You are the most tiresome and disagreeable child I ever knew in my life! What's the reason you could not let Nanny put you to bed, hey, Miss? She says, she offered to do so above an hour ago: but so you always serve me, you do, you little plague! You force me to stay at home when my mistress is out, or else, you dawdle down here till past midnight; and let me come in ever so tired, I'm always to have the job of driving you up to your room, and undressing you!—But go your ways, now, as fast as you can, and be assured, I'll

some day or other make you pay for these provoking tricks—I will!"

Amazed at the woman's shrill vehemence, Adela regarded her with mingled indignation and disgust; whilst the frightened Christina, her gay spirits quite subdued, uttered a faint "good night," and crept away, without daring to pronounce another syllable.

"Poor little girl!" ejaculated Adela, when she was gone; "This is the consequence of being, to use her own phrase '*no favourite!*' Ah, surely, she ought to think it the greatest of blessings, to exchange the low-minded and selfish tyranny of a waiting-maid, for the reasonable sway of a well-educated governess."

It was now, as Mrs. Harris, the arrogant tirewoman, had justly observed, near midnight, and Adela began impatiently to wish for the return of the General, to escape the awkwardness of being obliged to announce herself, should her aunt reach home before him. The fire was nearly extinguished; no one came near her to take her orders concerning supper; and the room, but scantily lighted, large, and very lofty,

looked gloomy and depressing. Adela, from her dislike of the careless and indolent manner of the servants she had hitherto seen, forbore to ring; though, after travelling so many miles since a slight and early dinner, she was really faint from want of nourishment. She contrasted the comforts of the dear sociable home she had quitted, with the neglected situation in which she was now placed; and, throwing herself upon a sofa, cold, cheerless, and forlorn, felt almost tempted to weep at the dreary change.

A carriage, at length, drove hastily up to the door, and a loud, authoritative knock, proclaimed the return of some of the family. Adela started from her recumbent posture, and endeavoured to assume an air of greater cheerfulness. A quick step was presently heard ascending the stairs; and, the next moment, her uncle entered the room.

"My poor Adela, my dear niece!" cried he, in an accent of the utmost kindness: "How I grieve that you have spent such a long, lonely, melancholy evening! I know not why, but I had persuaded my-

self you would not be here to-night. Who travelled with you, and at what hour did you arrive?"

"My brother escorted me, and we reached town, I believe, about nine o'clock."

"Did Julius alight?"

"No, sir; he was impatient to drive to my father's, and change his dress for some evening engagement."

The General now began to enquire how she had disposed of herself during the few days she had spent at Bath, and how she had left his brother.

"Much better," replied Adela; "I resided in his house till Julius was able to set out with me, and heard excellent accounts of the progress of his recovery."

"But I hope you heard them from his own lips? He surely did not admit you into his house, and yet refuse to see you?"

Adela cast down her eyes, and faintly answered—

"I was told my father was not well enough to grant me an interview."

"Poor child! This was most unkindly

rigorous. But we will not talk of unpleasant subjects to-night. Tell me, have you seen any of my family?"

Adela, glad to advert to a more enlivening theme, spoke in warm terms of the hospitable reception she had experienced from Christina; and amused her uncle with an account of the deception she had practised upon Sir Patrick Harley.

"I need not," said the General, laughing, "after so characteristic an instance of the spirit by which she is governed, put you upon your guard against the mischief-loving Christina. She is as very a pickle as ever existed; but sensible and good-humoured, and, all things considered, not deficient in attaching qualities. But, my dear girl, have you had any supper?"

"To own the truth," answered Adela, "I have, on the contrary, undergone the longest period of abstinence to which I ever yet was condemned! It will do me no harm, I dare say; but I am sorry that, as it has been very disagreeable, it can claim no praise, since it was also wholly involuntary."

"You poor little famished creature!

Why did you not take better care of yourself? Why did you not ring the bell, and tell the servants what you chose to have? But come down with me now to my study. Mrs. Cleveland, I believe, will be late to-night; for, if I am not mistaken, there is some engagement, after the opera, to a ball. You shall, therefore, on the present occasion, be a guest in my region of the house; and there, I shall be very glad to accept the fragments of your repast: I cannot expect you, hungry as you are, to be very lavish in your distribution; but I promise not to be too voracious."

He then drew her arm within his, and they descended to his apartment, where she spent nearly an hour, much pleased by his courtesy, and enlivened by his good-humour.

On retiring to the apartment which had been assigned to her, nothing could exceed the surprise with which she gazed around her. It consisted of a small bed-chamber at the back of the house, faintly lighted by a single window, facing a high dead wall, and communicated with a dressing-closet which might justly be denominated a *boudoir*, being unprovided with any window at all.

In the chimney stood a miserable little rusty grate, containing just fire enough, not to warm the room, but to fill it, at every gust that blew, with puffs of suffocating smoke. Neither shovel nor tongs appeared: but a small crooked old poker rested upon a broken wire fender, and was its only appendage. The furniture, coarse and scanty, of this inviting dormitory, corresponded so well with its other attractions, that it had all the air of having been freshly imported from a servant's garret.

Much mortified, yet half inclined to laugh, Adela looked at Amy, who, sleepy and weary as she was, yet found voice to utter the most sarcastic strictures upon the scene before them.

"It will be all of one piece," cried she, "with every thing me have seen in this fine, shabby house! Nothing but foolish show outside, and beggar meanness inside! Ah, poor dear young Missy! You got plenty, great heap of relations; but you got but one comfortable home! When you go see your mamma, you be shut up like poor prisoner, and have no speaky with any body; and no love, no thanks for leaving

pleasant friends, and shivering all long winter through, in cold, lonely place! When you go see your papa—oh, that be worse! He bid you be shut up in one room always, and no give you welcome, and no see you; and you nothing for do, but sometimes cry, sometimes read, and, now and then, take stolen walk with Massa Julius. Then, you come see your uncle, and your aunt, and your cousins; and they all out, and you have no victuals for eat, no friend for speak, and be put here, for smoke away all your white skin, and be made as black as Amy!"

Adela, now becoming sensible of the danger of encouraging, in her unguarded attendant, a spirit of discontent which might awaken so much enmity in the household, cried out—"Hush, hush, my dear Amy, I will not suffer you to put me too much out of humour with this poor room. I own, that when I first opened the door, I was a little horror-struck; but I am very tired, and I dare say I shall sleep as well in my faded check bed, as if it was made of damask. And, you know, we shall not be here very long."

"Ah, me be glad of that! Mrs. Somerville give you better sort of welcome than this!"

Having dismissed the murmuring and fatigued Amy, Adela found, as she had prognosticated, the soundest repose in her unsightly couch, and arose, invigorated and refreshed, just as the young Christina, forgetful of the humiliation of the preceding night, and as gay as a lark, begged for admission at her door.

"Oh, Miss Cleveland!" cried she, capering into the room; "I have the best news in the world to tell you! Only think, poor Mademoiselle Raw-head-and-bloody-bones has been so jumbled and pomelled by her long journey in the stage-coach, that she can't stir out of her bed. The maid who has dressed me, has seen her, and found her as hoarse as a raven, and complaining of a violent pain in all her bones; and she has desired, when mamma awakes, that the maid will inform her how seriously indisposed she is."

"And have you no concern at all for the poor soul?"

Christina laughed, and answered—

"Why, not quite so much, as, I perceive, you think I ought. Were she any thing but a governess, I really *should* feel for her a little: but how can you expect me to have much compassion for one, who belongs to a class of people I have been at war with all my life? That odious Mrs. Harris, who took the liberty, before you, last night, to treat me so impertinently, is not, upon the whole, so hateful to me as a professed governess. She gives me an insolent scolding when I put her out of humour; but then, it's soon over, and I have nothing more to do with her till the next day. Now a governess is always at one's elbow; if she does not storm, she incessantly finds fault, and grumbles, and contradicts, and pesters one with lectures, and watches every look, and seems to think it the duty of her life, whether one sits or stands, laughs or cries, to make one as uncomfortable as she can. To do myself justice," added she, archly; "it has always been the study of *my* life, not to remain in their debt. But with regard to this poor mademoiselle, Mrs. Commings, the housekeeper, has been told what an aching jelly

she is, and, I suppose, will send her up some warm posset or other, that will set her to rights."

She then proceeded to say, that she had been into the nursery the moment she was dressed, to fetch her little sister, Laura, in order to bring her to Adela's room: "But, do you know, Miss Cleveland," continued she, "they would not trust her with me, though she almost cried to come to me. This was mere impertinence in the consequential nurse; for, at other times, I have very often carried Laura in my arms, and had the sole care of her for above an hour. However, you will see the pretty little soul if you go down to papa's room presently. He always has her brought to him whilst he is at breakfast."

"He told me so last night, and invited me to breakfast with him."

"Dear, I wish I might go with you."

"And why should you not?"

"I am sure I don't know, if you give me leave." Then, taking Adela's hand, "How good-natured you are, my dear cousin," she added; "I shall love you better than any body in the universe, if you

continue thus kind and sociable with me. Jemima is sometimes pleasant and chatty enough, but one is never sure of her; and, lately, having gained the privileges of a grown-up lady, she has taken it into her head to look down upon me as if I had gone back to the days of pap, rattles, and leading-strings. She forgets how very short a time it is, since we conned over our lessons together, and were both considered as little school-room misses, who were never to appear, except at dessert. Now, she thinks of nothing but going out, and being admired; and makes me sick with her affectation every time I see her."

"Was she at the ball your mamma and your eldest sister went to last night?"

"No, she is out of town for a few days, on a visit to one of my aunts."

Then, casting her eyes accidentally upon the hangings of the bed, and from them towards some of the crazy furniture with which the apartment was decorated, Christina burst into a hearty fit of laughter, and said—

"How truly poverty-struck every thing in this room appears! I never saw such

a ridiculous place in my life. I wonder where they could find such a collection of lumber. It's worse even than our old school-room. I dare say, there is not an alms-house in the kingdom that is not more creditably fitted up. Upon my honour, it's a shame they should ever have dreamed of putting you into such miserable quarters. And, Lord! suppose there should be vermin in this old rubbish!"

"Me hope," cried Amy, who was busied in arranging her lady's wardrobe in the tottering and solitary chest of drawers; "Me hope, if there is, they will run fast, and when warm weather comes, stock all the whole house! It would not be fair, if my young Missy keep them all to herself!"

Christina, staring first at Amy, whose person she had hitherto but slightly remarked, and then, reflecting upon what she had said, again indulged an immoderate fit of risibility, and exclaimed—

"How I *should* be entertained to behold poor mamma's consternation if a vulgar, impertinent bug was to find its way into her delicate apartment! Or suppose the

white throat of Jemima, the night before some very splendid *fête*, was to be marked with the disgraceful bites of any of these nauseous creatures! Mercy upon me! What an indescribable fuss there would be! I really don't believe, they would think all London could furnish poison enough to destroy such insolent intruders! — Barbara would be the best off in the midst of the bustle: she would set about making experiments upon some of the little beasts; and after dinner, to settle the stomachs of the company, might, perhaps, bring forth two or three, in different states, to examine through a microscope!—I once heard of her doing this with some dried earwigs."

Adela, being now dressed, interrupted the voluble conjectures of her whimsical young friend, and they descended to the General's room together.

He received them both with the utmost cordiality. Adela, in particular, whose looks were much improved by the refreshing repose she had enjoyed, he regarded with great satisfaction, protesting, as she approached to receive his outstretched

hand, that the sight of so blooming and cheerful a countenance was enough to infuse good-humour into him for the whole day—

"Or if your good-humour, my dear papa," said Christina, "should meet with any stumbling-block, go up into cousin Adela's apartment; and the regaling sight you will there behold, cannot fail to restore your spirits in a moment!"

The General, patting her head, enquired what she meant?

"Why, I mean, sir," resumed she, with great earnestness, "that they have put my cousin into a sort of broker's magazine for infirm goods! She has not a chair, or a table, or a dressing-glass that is not in so dangerous a state of decay, that the least touch threatens to make cripples of them to the end of time!—I am certain it could be with no less than the hazard of breaking her bones by a sudden crash to the ground, that she could venture to repose upon any of the seats so magnificently provided for her!"

"Is this account true?" demanded the General, turning hastily to Adela.

She owned, that, allowing something for a lively imagination, it was perfectly correct.

"How abominably careless or insolent in that wooden-faced Commings!" resumed he, very warmly—"I am quite indignant at her, and really shocked and ashamed that you should have been so scandalously accommodated even for a single night! But you may depend upon it, my dear girl, the evil shall be remedied this very day."

He then rung the bell, and ordered the servant who answered it, to send the housekeeper to him directly.

"She is just gone out, sir."

"Well, then, bid her come to me the moment she returns: and bring up breakfast."

Whilst this order was performing, the gay tones of a child's voice upon the stairs attracted the attention of Christina.

"Oh, here comes our darling Laura!" exclaimed she; and running out of the room, she presently returned, leading carefully in by the hand, the most lovely and engaging little creature Adela had ever beheld. Naturally fond of children, she raised her

fondly in her arms, and imprinted a thousand kisses upon her rosy cheek.

"Is she not a little angel?" cried the delighted Christina.

"She is grace and beauty personified!" answered Adela.

"You are undesignedly paying yourself a high compliment!" cried the General— "Laura has always been thought remarkably like you."

"And to say the truth," in a half-whisper, observed Christina, "she has chosen no very ugly model!"

"There never is any ugliness," said her father, directing towards her a look of kindness, "where a genuine expression of goodness of heart brightens the countenance!"

"No, papa," answered Christina, laughing, "only a little sallowness of complexion, and dwarfishness of person, to which the eye, you know, may grow so accustomed, as, in time, to mistake them for beauty! I wish, however, mamma would shew signs of a disposition to fall into this mistake!"

"Your mother allows that there is more

play of features, more character in your face, than in almost any she ever saw."

"Yes, the sort of character you would attribute to a female Robin Good-fellow! But so ignoble, so ludicrous, so unseemly in a girl of family! Well, well, never mind! If ever I meet with a merry imp like myself, we will run into the woods together, and live with the fairies, "*under the blossom that hangs on the bough.*" I am sure I shall never do to associate with men of fashion, and fine ladies."

"Why you little cynic! What makes you so severe against them?"

"Their excessive dullness, for one thing, papa! All humour, and sport, and originality, they call vulgar and low bred: and besides that, they require such an immoderate share of beauty, or of rank, or of wealth, to rouse them to attention, and dispose them to be civil, that I am always planning some future scheme of life that may take me out of the reach of their cold-hearted sneers. I cannot be happy, unless I am suffered to laugh without being criticised for the width of my mouth; or permitted to caper and frisk, without being told I am ungraceful!"

The General, encircled by three beings, who, in their several ways, all stood so high in his favour; incited to mirth by Christina; softened into the tenderest indulgence by the lovely little Laura; and insensibly drawn into hourly increasing approbation by Adela, passed a large portion of the morning in a manner so completely satisfactory to his feelings, that on looking at his watch, and finding the day so far advanced, he was evidently much chagrined to be under the necessity of preparing to go out.

"But before I sally forth," cried he, "let me have the pleasure, my dear Adela, of presenting you to Mrs. Cleveland. Christina, go and see whether your mother is yet come down to breakfast. She was out late last night, and will therefore not be particularly alert this morning."

The little girl obeyed, and returning in a few minutes, said her mamma and eldest sister were both in the back drawing-room.

"And Laura has been enquired for;" continued she. "Mamma declares that she quite angry at your keeping her so long yourself."

"Well, then, Laura shall go up stairs with us;" said the General: and raising her in his arms, he led the way towards the apartment in which his lady was sitting.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by Cox and Baylis, 75, Great Queen St
Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.